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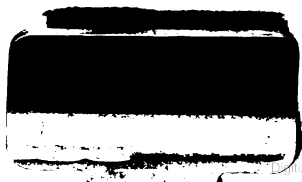
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THE MAKING
OF A
NEWSPAPER





THE
MAKING OF
A NEWSPAPER

EXPERIENCES OF CERTAIN REPRESENTATIVE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS RELATED BY THEMSELVES

. AND EDITED BY

MELVILLE PHILIPS

"In these times we fight for ideas, and newspapers are our fortresses."—HEINE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

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AN EDITORIAL PARAGRAPH.

THE bulk of this volume first appeared in print in *Lippincott's Magazine*, constituting therein the Journalist Series, the chief object of which was to afford the public a close and comprehensive view of various phases of newspaper life and work. It is hoped that the papers may beguile the lay reader, for whom they were principally written, and that in evoking memories and by occasional useful hints, they may arouse the languid interest of the fellow-craftsman ; and, moreover, that their preservation in book form may meet with the approval of both. In the main the individual experiences are typical ; in their entirety they are trustworthy. We hope they are readable.

MELVILLE PHILIPS.





CONTENTS.

	PAGE	
"GETTING OUT" THE PAPER	3	✓
BY MELVILLE PHILIPS		
Literary Editor of the <i>Philadelphia Press</i>		
THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	23	
BY A. K. McCLURE		
Editor of the <i>Philadelphia Times</i>		
THE MANAGING EDITOR	41	
BY JULIUS CHAMBERS		
Late Managing Editor of the <i>New York World</i>		
THE CITY EDITOR	61	✓
BY A. E. WATROUS		
Of the <i>New York Press</i>		
THE HISTORY OF A NEWS DESPATCH	91	
BY SAMUEL MERRILL		
Of the <i>Boston Globe</i>		
THE LITERARY EDITOR	115	
BY MELVILLE PHILIPS		
THE TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT	131	✓
BY W. J. C. MEIGHAN		
Of the <i>New York Herald</i>		

	PAGE
+ A "MAGNIFICENT 'BEAT'"	151
BY MOSES P. HANDY	
Chief of the Department of Promotion and Publicity of the World's Fair	
THE NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATOR	173
BY MAX DE LIPMAN	
Of the <i>New York Press</i>	
HEARING MY REQUIEM	188
BY GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND ("Gath")	
THE SPORTING EDITOR	205
BY J. B. MCCORMICK ("Macon")	
X EARLY EDITORIAL EXPERIENCES	227 ✓
BY MURAT HALSTEAD	
Editor of the <i>Brooklyn Standard-Union</i>	
CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM	241
BY M. H. DE YOUNG	
Editor of the <i>San Francisco Chronicle</i>	
THE NEWSPAPER OF THE FUTURE	255
BY JOHN A. COCKERILL	
Editor of the <i>New York Advertiser</i>	
MEN WHO REIGNED	273
BY JOHN RUSSELL YOUNG	
Ex-Minister to China; Editor of <i>Philadelphia</i> <i>Evening Star</i> , and Fourth Vice-President of the Philadelphia & Reading R. R.	
THE REPORTER'S FIRST MURDER CASE	305
BY JULIUS CHAMBERS	
AN INDEX EXPURGATORIUS	319

"GETTING OUT" THE PAPER

I



THE MAKING OF A NEWSPAPER.

“GETTING OUT” THE PAPER.

BY MELVILLE PHILIPS.

IT looks so cheap, and—when one has gleaned the news from it—so worthless; certainly the making of it does not seem to have cost much in time, labor, brains, or money. Doubtless the average reader of a daily newspaper of the first class has no conception of the cost or the method of its making; he is not likely to regard the process as complex, and though he sees and admits “the power of the press,” he would be probably surprised to learn that its annual product in America alone amounts to one hundred million dollars; that the aggregate annual circulation of the 20,000 periodical publications printed in the United States and Canada is more than four billions—a stupendous figure which implies or allows the yearly purchase of 300 copies of some periodical by each family of five persons in the land. That, in a word, is to say: the influence

of American journalism reaches to every American home.

It is all very well and easy enough to find fault with your daily newspaper, the powerful right arm of American journalism which alone concerns us here. Faulty it is,—every one, in greater or less degree, of the two thousand dailies issued in the United States and Canada. Yet, withal, a wonderful and indispensable product of the genius of man. A popular newspaper, in its good and evil reports, is nothing more or less than the sufficient supply of a popular demand ; it is, in a sense, the voice of the people, whether that be the voice of God or not. Indiscriminate denunciation of it inevitably recalls the bitter outcry of Sir Fretful Plagiary, in Sheridan's Critic: "The newspapers! Sir, they are the most villainous, licentious, abominable, infernal—Not that I ever read them!"

The professional newspaper man has the assurance to believe that it requires no highly educated moral sense or superior acumen to perceive the shortcomings of American daily journalism. He is certainly disposed to believe that no layman can be more acutely sensible of these shortcomings than himself. At the same time it may occur to him that, if the excellent but exacting men and women who inveigh against the sins of his craft knew more of its difficulties and tribulations, they might be more intelligent and less caustic in their criticism.

It is as a feeble essay towards such instruction that we submit the following sketch :

The daily issue of a metropolitan newspaper of the first class is the product of the skilled labor of an army of men. Of prime importance is the *news* which its staff of local reporters has gathered for it ; which its special correspondents in the State or at the chief news-centres throughout the country have telegraphed ; and which its foreign correspondents cable, either direct, or to a distributing agent. Besides these “special” sources of information, it receives the news of the world, domestic and foreign, through various press associations, such as the Associated Press, the United Press, the United States Press Association, and the Dunlap Cable Company. In every corner of the world it has a representative ; at home there may be so many as a thousand “local” correspondents contributing their mite towards rounding out the record of a day’s news.

Let us say it is noon. There is little doing at this hour in the office of a great daily. The editor-in-chief, the responsible head of the staff, may have begun already, indeed, the moulding of public opinion, or may be locking horns with the proprietor or his representative in the business office over the policy of the opinion that was moulded the day before. It is possible that several of the “editorial” writers may be at work on articles suggested or endorsed by the editor-

in-chief. The managing-editor's assistant, or secretary, may be sorting the morning mail ; the literary editor thumbing the pages of the new books and magazines ; the exchange editor seeking for "miscellany" among the columns of "esteemed contemporaries" ; and the city editor or his assistant clipping hints or beats from rival sheets, filling in the assignment-book, and making ready for the day's action. Yet work has not fairly begun ; though, to be sure, high noon is the equivalent of midnight to the afternoon papers, engaged in collecting and supplementing the aftermath of the morning news.

As the day wears on, a swelling air of bustle pervades the office. The managing editor arrives, and is at once absorbed in discussing with the heads of departments the outlook for the morrow's paper. Perhaps the editor-in-chief or the business manager may have occasion to converse with him on the appearance in general or in detail of the day's issue ; but, unless a mistake is to be corrected or a blunder explained, this is an irksome formality, for newspaper men are not given to retrospection ; they call a printed paper a "dead duck" ; and after twelve hours it is "ancient history." With the news editor and city editor, however, the managing editor seeks early consultation. While yet the afternoon is young, the former (the same personage as the night editor on many of the leading journals) has been preparing to "cover" such

important events as are "in sight." The city editor, having already assigned certain members of his staff to the performance of certain duties, is ready for conference as to special reports or local "features." Meanwhile the routine men are abroad on their several quests: the court reporters, the financial editor, the commercial men, and the railroad reporter are in the courts, on the street, among the boards of trade, the banks, the commission houses, and the railroad offices; the dramatic editor may be at a *matinée*, interviewing an actor, or fencing with an astute theatrical manager; the real-estate man is glean- ing intelligence of new buildings, property deals, and transfers; the sporting editors are at the base-ball field or the race-track; and an artist or two may be sketching a criminal in the dock or the ruins of a fire. Tranquilly in his corner, or secluded room, the editor of the Sunday supplement is sifting and editing contributed manuscripts, or the latest installment of stories and miscellaneous sketches from one or more of the literary syndicates.

By four o'clock the office is fully astir; the newspaper is making. The reporters come and go; the telegraph boys toil up and clatter down the stairs; the news editor is clearing the field for action, and one or two of his assistants, the telegraph editors, are at their desks "handling the early copy,"—which is to say, looking over the "manifolded" despatches, on thin oily paper,

known as "flimsy," which come in yellow envelopes from the press associations, and have, for the most part, been printed in the afternoon papers. The telegraph editors send in to the composing-room such of these, notably the market reports, as seem to be of a conclusive character, and not likely to be "killed" by later despatches. Similarly, as the dinner hour approaches, the editors in the local department prepare the early reportorial copy for setting; and thus, by six or seven o'clock, the foreman of the composing-room is ready to feed, through the "copy-cutter," a mass of news in manuscript to the regiment of compositors or to the more voracious type-setting machine.

Returning from dinner, say at eight o'clock, the managing editor finds the machinery of the office running smoothly, if not at full speed. ~~The night editor is engineer-in-charge. He is a spectacle for gods and men. Unknown to the outside world, he is yet, upon the nightly departure of the managing editor, the presiding genius of the office; and his official life, of necessity brief, is lived at fever heat.~~ It is he who "makes-up" the paper; determines its size (whether a single, double, triple, or quadruple sheet); allots to each department its proper space; and who is alike responsible for what has gone into the paper and for what has been left out of it. Nightly, after conference with the foreman of the composing-room, he admonishes the editors to "cut things

down, there is no room " ; nightly, in brazen contradiction of this cry, he wires, in answer to the query of some correspondent, " Yes, rush interview for all it's worth ; and 2,000 words of murder " ; nightly he badgers the city editor who stands up doggedly for extra space or a position on the first page ; nightly he threatens the leading editorial writer with an encroachment of advertising upon brevier. The night editor is a man of snap judgment ; a man of wings. Now he is in the composing-room, bending over the " stones " ; now he comes rushing back, his bundle of proofs streaming in the air, to alter a schedule, answer a query, stop a stupid despatch, wire instruction to a correspondent, point out a delinquency to a telegraph editor, or light his pipe.

Meanwhile, amid the rattling click of telegraph instruments, the pale-faced editors under the row of electrics are stolidly blue-pencilling the news despatches as they read them. The work is hard and wearing ; aside from the " specials " there may be more than 50,000 words received from the press associations, and to edit all this, to read it intelligently and closely, to " boil it down " and " put heads " on it of just so many letters to the line, one must have learned the trick of concentrating one's thoughts despite the antics of the office boy, the objurgatory shouts of the night editor, the periodic questions of the proof-readers, and the bitter reminders

of the copy-cutter. In the city-room, where the reporters are gradually getting down to their desks, it is nearly as bad with the assistant editors. And in the meantime, in their long buzzing room, the compositors pile up galley upon galley of type, until the hour arrives for the first of the pages to "go down." Then the foreman, with the assistant "make-ups,"—the night-editor's schedule in his hand, and the night editor himself at his elbow,—proceeds to dump into the "forms" the galleys of type which have been read and corrected and are now arrayed for use upon the stones. Each form represents a page, and is mounted upon a high table which moves on wheels. It may seem an easy matter to follow the night-editor's schedule of display or "scare-heads"—the longer articles with the conspicuous head lines,—and sometimes it is ; but oftener the articles will not fit and must be moved from form to form, or a tardy "take" or two may prevent their immediate use, or the engraver may be late with an accompanying picture. The page cannot wait, however ; the electrotypers are clamoring for it ; so the night editor straightens it out some way or another and down it goes. Its fellows follow after at regular intervals.

The last despatch in the schedule of the Washington correspondent has been received and edited and set up ; the last sheet of copy has been worried or wrenched from the hands of a

belated reporter ; the chief editorial writer has sent down the editorial page ; the sporting editor has rushed through for the first edition his "beat" of a local prize-fight ; the wires are racing less furiously, and some of them have ceased to click ; only one of the telegraph editors, perhaps, is driving his blue pencil over the flimsy, while the others, in the deepening hush, take gratefully to their pipes. The last page is making up ; the night editor, just as a messenger boy comes puffing in with another envelope, sends word to "let up" for the first edition. The solitary drudge tears open the packet, searches its contents, pastes an important clipping on a sheet of white paper, and struggles with the "add" to the presence of his chief. Perhaps there is yet time, but at this critical moment the night editor is not an agreeable man to talk to. He is trying to get twenty columns of news marked "must" into a page of eight columns, and get it there in five minutes. The marvel is, that, in some inexplicable way, by a method known only to the elect of the craft, he succeeds. To fail in point of time is to miss the mails, and thus arouse the eloquent wrath of Constant Reader in a dozen counties. When at length, let us say at two o'clock in the morning, the night editor returns to his den adrip with perspiration, the last form has gone down, and ere he has settled himself at his desk it has been electrotyped, and placed with the plates of the other pages on the press ; and presently with

a mighty throb and clank the paper is printing. In an hour that marvellous machine in the basement stamps the news upon fifty miles of white paper ; in a second it cuts, pastes, folds, and delivers twenty-five complete copies ; and one of these the night editor soon holds in his hands, and scans its damp pages for flaws.

It may be half an hour, an hour, or two hours later that the last "lift" of a form for corrections or additions is made. Over the wires and at the end of the last sheet of flimsy has come the welcome message, "Good-night." All others have deserted the office ; the reporters have long since gone home ; the compositors are going, save, perhaps, when a selected squad linger until dawn to aid the editor of the Sunday supplement in making-up his leisurely and illuminated pages. Then while the night editor and his assistants fare forth to their omelettes or oysters, other toilers in the building take up the task where they have left it. The men in the press and mailing rooms may labor on until the counting-office has opened, and thus the day is rounded ; for, verily, in the making of a great newspaper there is no end of work.

The heaviest single item of expense for a metropolitan journal of large circulation is the paper on which it is printed. This varies greatly, as a matter of course. It is within bounds to place the paper-bill of an eight-page newspaper, with

an average daily circulation of seventy-five thousand, at close upon one thousand dollars a day. Then the bulky Sunday editions of from sixteen to thirty-two pages, of the larger journals, swell the weekly totals. Mr. Eugene M. Camp published some time ago the following as the annual paper bills of eighteen leading American newspapers :

Atlanta "Constitution"	\$ 63,000
Baltimore "American"	103,000
Boston "Herald"	315,000
Boston "Globe"	326,000
Chicago "Herald"	265,000
Chicago "News"	324,000
Chicago "Tribune"	195,000
Cincinnati "Enquirer"	252,000
Kansas City "Journal"	53,000
Louisville "Courier-Journal"	135,000
Minneapolis "Tribune"	60,000
New York "World"	667,500
Philadelphia "Press"	245,000
Philadelphia "Times"	165,000
San Francisco "Call"	120,000
San Francisco "Examiner"	155,000
St. Louis "Globe-Democrat"	205,000
St. Louis "Republic"	125,000

The composition bills vary from about seven hundred and fifty dollars a week for four-page papers, like the Boston *Post* or Baltimore *News*, to six thousand dollars a week for the largest ten- and twelve-page papers, which issue special suburban editions, involving the waste of many

columns of "local" news put in type for particular places and not used in the principal city editions. It is by means of these special editions that the amazing circulation of certain metropolitan journals is secured. Just as competition and the extended and cheapened use of wood-pulp have materially reduced the cost of white paper, and made possible and profitable the publication of the eight-page penny paper, so the gradual introduction of the various type-setting machines bids fair to lessen the cost of composition. We append, however, the weekly bills of several of the great dailies, as given by Mr. Camp at a time when the type-setting machine was comparatively unknown :

Baltimore "American"	\$2,000
Boston "Globe"	4,100
Chicago "Herald"	2,106
Chicago "News"	1,500
Chicago "Tribune"	2,500
Cincinnati "Enquirer"	3,200
New York "Herald"	3,780
New York "Times"	3,000
New York "World"	6,000
Philadelphia "Ledger"	2,150
San Francisco "Call"	1,650
St. Louis "Globe-Democrat"	2,700
St. Louis "Republic"	2,000

It would be impossible to embrace in a single statement the editorial expenditures of the leading newspapers. They differ in this respect

more widely than in any other. There is one successful class, represented by the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, whose staff of editorial writers does not cost it one hundred dollars a week ; there is another class, including papers like the New York *Sun* and Chicago *Tribune*, the weekly salaries of whose editorial writers foot up not less than one thousand dollars. Similarly great newspapers differ widely in the amount of money they expend for telegraphic news. It has been estimated that of the \$16,570,000 which the publishers of the United States annually pay for their news, the press despatches cost \$1,820,000, the special despatches \$2,250,000, and local news, \$12,500,000. The average monthly bills for special despatches of fourteen leading journals have been estimated as follows :

Atlanta " Constitution "	\$1,100
Boston " Herald "	5,500
Chicago " Herald "	6,500
Chicago " Tribune "	4,500
Cincinnati " Commercial-Gazette "	5,800
Cincinnati " Enquirer "	4,750
Kansas City " Journal "	1,050
Minneapolis " Tribune "	3,000
New York " World "	9,514
Philadelphia " Press "	3,600
San Francisco " Call "	3,500
San Francisco " Examiner "	8,000
St. Louis " Globe-Democrat "	11,660
St. Louis " Republic "	3,300

The above are the figures of Mr. Camp ; while Mr. William Henry Smith estimates that a great journal will spend for special news "between \$8,000 and \$9,000 a month, or \$100,000 a year in round numbers." As opposed to this lavish outlay, certain excellent local newspapers with established advertising patronage, notably the Baltimore *Sun*, satisfied with the outside news-service of the press associations, pay for telegraph-tolls not more than one hundred dollars a week. Again, such prosperous "local" journals or advertising mediums probably expend only from seventy-five to one hundred and twenty-five dollars a week on the special correspondents who send news by telegraph or post, and are paid by "space," or at so much per column, contributed or printed ; whereas for the same services the papers of the first class pay from eight hundred to two thousand dollars per week.

The staff of reporters is not such a variable quantity, since all metropolitan journals must give, with more or less of completeness, the news of the cities in which they are published. There are, indeed, in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Chicago, penny newspapers whose entire weekly outlay for the gathering of local news, including the salary of the city editor, does not exceed one hundred and thirty-five dollars. But the larger newspapers employ from twenty to twenty-five reporters at an average weekly

salary of twenty dollars, and pay their city editors from fifty dollars to seventy-five dollars. Then there are the telegraph editors, say five of them at an average weekly wage of twenty-five dollars (the New York *Sun* pays best for this important and laborious service); the literary, dramatic, and financial editors, on salaries ranging from thirty dollars to seventy-five dollars per week; the news, sometimes, as we have seen, the same as the night, editor, and—saving his highness the editor-in-chief, whose income is too magnificent for mention—there is, finally, the managing editor, who may be paid from fifty to any number of dollars a week.

A word should be said about the cable-tolls. These are not so heavy as the public may think. The cable despatches and Sunday letters not only come in skeleton form, very much condensed in substance and abbreviated in letter, to be expanded (though not unduly) on this side of the sea, but they are paid for by various syndicates of newspapers which receive them. Thus, the New York journal which arranges for a cable letter sells it to a leading paper in five other cities. The cable letter as printed makes one thousand words, we shall say. As received it was five hundred words in length, and the toll for it (at twelve cents a word) was sixty dollars. But divided among six the cost is only ten dollars a thousand words. Three New York papers published short reports from the American base-

ball team that played its way a year or two ago around the world. Now, the telegraph rate to and from Australia is two dollars and fifty cents a word, as the message must be repeated twenty times and go and come by way of Europe. Even at the rate for newspapers of one dollar and twenty-five cents a word these base-ball reports seem a remarkable piece of extravagance, until one knows of the ingenious cipher system by which they were received. There are just so many probable plays in a game of base-ball ; only about twenty words were necessary for each report.

There is opportunity here, in mentioning our telegraphic communications with the antipodes, of remarking a curious illustration of the modern annihilation of time and space. Deeming, the murderer, was lately hanged in Australia at one minute past 10 A.M., and American morning papers of the same date announced the fact. Chronologically speaking the difference in time between Melbourne and Washington is about ten hours (*i. e.*, one hundred and fifty degrees of longitude), so that, in a sense, the news of the execution reached this country before the event took place.

In this partial survey of the process and cost of making a "mammoth newspaper," no account has been taken of the business office, the mailing room, the foundry, and the press-room. Should one complete a list of annual expenditures, how-

ever, involving such items as a "dress" of type (costing from \$10,000 to \$15,000), and the wages of proof-readers (aggregating from \$5,000 to \$15,000 yearly), the grand total would exceed a million. That, to be sure, is one kind of a newspaper. The reader knows the kind, and doubtless knows whether it is the best.



THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF.

BY COL. A. K. M'CLURE.

YOU just struck my suit when you requested a pen-picture of the editor-in-chief. I am one from away back, and have never been anything else in journalism. The editor-in-chief does not belong to any particular class of newspapers. He is just as important a character in the little village weekly as he is in the great daily ; and whether he talks, or directs others to talk, for five hundred or for five hundred thousand subscribers, he is all the same editor-in-chief. My experience began forty-five years and a few odd months ago, when the click of the telegraph was a strange tongue to ninety-nine one-hundredths of the newspaper men of the country, and when the editor-in-chief usually combined about all the important features of the establishment,—viz., foreman, compositor, pressman, clerk, devil, etc. It was not in one of the great centres of population of the State, but away off in the shadows of the eastern spurs of the Alleghanies, in a little county the creation of

which never could be plausibly explained except by the single fact that the people above and below the "Narrows" never agreed upon anything but to bury people when they died. A county, however small, had to have its newspapers, even at that early day, and the facts that there happened to be no Whig organ in the county, and that I happened to have no other employment at the time, called me, quite unexpectedly to myself, to the highly responsible position of editor-in-chief. I knew just nothing at all about either editing or printing a newspaper. One kind editorial friend, who is yet living in mellow and honored old age, patiently corrected my original grammar and gave me space in his little newspaper for occasional contributions while I was serving an apprenticeship to another calling. When my journalistic venture reached the dignity of five hundred circulation, it was reckoned a magnificent success, and my aptness in acquiring mechanical knowledge, and willingness to perform the chief labor of issuing the paper in every department, saved me from financial disaster.

There are some memorable incidents connected with my early experience as editor-in-chief that may be worth recording. On one point my recollection is very distinct. I have, during the later years of my life, after the experience of more than a generation in journalism, appreciated how much had to be learned from day to day to keep pace with the progress of my profession ;

but when I first became editor-in-chief of my village newspaper the one thing that I understood perfectly was how to edit and generally conduct a public journal. It is possible that many of my readers, as well as the most of the more experienced journalists of that day, differed from me in my well-settled conviction that I printed the best newspaper published in the country, but among the pleasantest memories of my journalistic career are the sweet delusions of my boyhood editorship-in-chief, when everything in my own newspaper was simply perfect. Delusion it was, but none the less delightful ; and delusions give the many sweet recollections that all turn back to when they reach the period of a graver appreciation of life and its duties. The labors of the editor-in-chief of the little village newspaper forty-five years ago were mostly directed to maintain its little subscription-list. Every subscriber was personally known to the editor-in-chief. He came in personal contact with them during court weeks, circuses, militia parades, etc., when they would wander into the town and occasionally drop in to pay their subscriptions or make a close barter to pay for the same in country produce, including wood, potatoes, turnips, cabbages, etc. The rural readers of that day were a frugal set, and the question of spending a dollar and a half for a newspaper was often a matter of the gravest consideration, and frequently required the employment of all the eloquence the editor-in-chief

could command to prevent subscribers from stopping their paper when they came to pay their bills. The good old rule prevailed, and was flaunted under the editorial head of the paper, that, under the decision of the post-office department, "no newspaper can be discontinued until all arrearages are paid." As an illustration of the important labors of the editor-in-chief of that day, I might mention one typical case of a reluctant subscriber, who, after trying the paper for six months, brought in a small load of half-rotted wood in payment of the seventy-five cents due for his subscription, and ordered his paper stopped. After much persuasion, I succeeded in getting a suspension of judgment on the subject until he should come into town again. When he returned some days thereafter, he said that he had consulted the women-folk about the matter, and they had concluded that they would continue another six months during the winter season, "as the papers were very convenient for tying up apple-butter crocks."

Unlike the editor-in-chief of any of our great dailies of to-day, the editor-in-chief of that time was omnipotent in everything pertaining to his newspaper; everything about the establishment was attended to by him in person. There were no reporters to play pranks and put libel suits upon you by airing their resentments in your columns. There were no editorial assistants to write on unthought-of subjects and ruin your

appetite for breakfast in the morning because of the things they made you say. There were no drummers to sell paper, as what was called the "bundle" came with scrupulous punctuality every two weeks on top of the stage from the place of purchase, fifty miles distant. Advertisers did not quarrel over positions, and the now familiar terms of "top of column" and "next to reading-matter" were unknown to the advertisers of the land. Volney B. Palmer was announced under the editorial head as the only authorized advertising agent in the United States, as he had taught all the editors-in-chief in the country that it would be a grave mistake to recognize any other to compete with him and reduce prices. His advertisements were chiefly payable in trade, with an occasional cash contract to enable him to get his commissions in money. There was no rush or jostle about newspaper establishments in those days to get out the edition; all things went smoothly and peacefully, and the life of the editor-in-chief was one of delightful self-appreciation, with reasonable worldly comfort and magnificent repose.

Mutability is stamped upon all human affairs; and this quiet, enjoyable life as editor-in-chief in one of the little towns of the State finally fulfilled its mission. A larger field was found, and I was promoted to editor-in-chief of one of the leading rural weeklies of the State. This new occasion created many new duties. Instead of keeping

the vision of the editor-in-chief within the narrow limits of a little county, a broader view of State questions and the moulding of political opinions throughout the Commonwealth had to be accepted. Pride in progressive journalism had begun to inspire the editor-in-chief in his broader field of labor. The paper was enlarged, and the editors of the State startled by a large quarto weekly that had risen to the dignity of a Washington, New York, and Philadelphia correspondent. "Oliver Oldschool," a name familiar to the long-time-ago readers of Joseph R. Chandler's *United States Gazette*, was then in retirement at Washington, enjoying the evening of his life as a starving dependant in one of the departments, and he was glad to furnish a weekly letter over his old signature for the munificent sum of two dollars each. Political friends were drawn upon in various parts of the State as contributors, and the most grateful recollection of that period of my life is that my newspaper ranked with not over a dozen other weeklies in the State which were more potent in shaping political sentiment at that day than are the great dailies of the present. I can recall not over a dozen weekly newspapers in Pennsylvania forty years ago, each of which was much more looked to for political guidance than are any of the daily journals of the present.

Daily newspapers were unknown in the State outside of Philadelphia and Pittsburg, and there

was but one in the entire State that claimed to have thirty thousand circulation, while no other daily exceeded five thousand, and most of them were below that figure. The editor-in-chief of the first-class weekly journal of that time was a more important factor in politics, and indeed a more important factor in directing public sentiment generally, than is the editor-in-chief of the leading journal now. Then, newspapers were a luxury. There was no tendency to sensation; they were, as a rule, sober, conservative, and seldom aggressive, although often violent in the heat of political campaigns, and they were accorded popular faith in their utterances. Now, the newspaper is in every home, leads even schools and churches in the great work of educating mankind, and readers have learned to think and act for themselves. The journalistic mountains are higher than they were in those days, but the valleys have filled up, and the people are rapidly growing towards equality with their teachers. There, as in my earlier experience, the editor-in-chief was the omnipotent ruler of the entire establishment; but the addition of a clerk in what was by courtesy called the counting-room, in one corner of which the editorial pen was wielded, dignified the establishment. I recall no incident of special note in this period of my experience as editor-in-chief beyond the often decidedly exciting occasions when armies came into our community wearing the uniforms

to which our people were strangers. Jeb Stuart came upon me most unceremoniously in 1862, and gave occasion for one of the most interesting and sensational locals that ever appeared in the newspaper. Of course it came from the pen of the editor-in-chief. Next General Lee came along and suspended publication for a week or two because the editor-in-chief did not remain to extend his hospitality to the Confederate commander. Later in the war General McCausland dropped in before daylight one morning, and all that was left a few hours later of a superbly equipped newspaper establishment were smouldering ruins. The newspaper, like the town, suddenly rose from its ashes, and it is needless to say that the editor-in-chief thereafter discussed the issues of the war with more than usual fervency.

I turn back to this chapter of my record as editor-in-chief with recollections quite as pleasant as those which go away beyond to my earlier and more awkward efforts in journalism. My newspaper had a most congenial and delightful clientage in a community of unusually intelligent people and thoroughly appreciative of everything progressive in my own profession. If I were asked what part of my life of more than sixty years I would rather live over again, I would choose the experience of more than half a generation in one of the oldest and pleasantest villages of the Cumberland Valley. There

honesty ruled in politics and public trust ; there was sincerity in religious and social life ; there was generous sympathy for the unfortunate of all classes and conditions, and there was bountiful appreciation of every honest and earnest public-spirited citizen. It was in such a community that the editor-in-chief who merited the confidence of his readers not only commanded the highest measure of respect, but attained the highest measure of usefulness among his people ; and in the crowded multitude of our cities, unknowing, unknown, and unsympathetic, with no heart-strings reaching from home to home, I often turn back to my days as editor-in-chief of a leading weekly newspaper as the sunniest of my life. Thurlow Weed once well said that the editor of a widely read, respected weekly newspaper occupied the most delightful position in the world ; but the potent country weekly has passed away forever. Wherever it has made fame for journalism and for editors-in-chief, the daily newspaper has come, and the original weekly is driven to the wayside villages.

What seemed to be bitter fate, bred by the desolation of war and the misfortunes which followed made me a city editor-in-chief. I had as I supposed, abandoned forever the dream of distinction in my old calling, but, however resolute in the purpose to pursue another profession, and however tempting seemed its opportunities, the love of journalism was never chilled, and it

was a luxury at times to turn from the more perplexing duties of the law and take a rest by writing a leader for one of the Philadelphia dailies. Wise men change their purposes, though fools seldom do so, and a tidal wave came along that caught me up as not unwilling drift-wood on the journalistic shore and again tumbled me into the position of editor-in-chief. It was regarded by many as a quixotic venture ; and when I say that the new journal was started without a single subscriber, and that it had neither party nor patronage on which to depend for support, it may be understood why considerate friends had grave apprehensions as to the issue of the effort. It happened to be a period when advancement in Philadelphia journalism was a recognized and supreme necessity ; and he who turns back during the last half generation and notes the progress of all the Philadelphia newspapers, and then takes a broader view of the wonderful progress of journalism in the leading centres of population, may readily understand why it was possible to achieve a high measure of success with a progressive newspaper.

The editor-in-chief of a great daily newspaper differs little from the editor-in-chief of the village journal except in degree of responsibility and vexation. The main difference that I see between the editor-in-chief of a great daily and the editor-in-chief of the old-time weekly is in the fact that he is made responsible for the utter-

ances of a dozen editorial associates whose writings he cannot revise, for the vaporings of scores of reporters whom he seldom sees and whose articles he rarely has knowledge of until they appear in his columns, and for hundreds of correspondents who are flashing their news and speculations over the wires from all parts of the earth, in the late hours of the night, to be hurriedly jammed into a newspaper and printed without opportunity of verifying any. For all these things the editor-in-chief is responsible in every way,—legally responsible for libels which he never dreamed of, and held morally responsible for utterances that often grate as harshly upon his views as upon the views of his readers.

An incident illustrative of the responsibility of an editor-in-chief of the daily newspaper is given in one of the twenty-nine libel suits I have enjoyed since my connection with daily journalism. A Washington correspondent, regarded as unusually reliable, in one of his regular despatches referred to some Pennsylvania politicians who were in Washington on political affairs, and stated that one of the men whose promotion they desired was a disreputable character and had been "convicted of perjury." The editor-in-chief was as guiltless of this despatch as the man in the moon, but there it was published and read by hundreds of thousands, and I was just as much responsible for it in law, and presumably in morals, as if I had written it

myself. When I saw it the next morning I knew that it was technically inaccurate, although substantially true, but I had learned, by going through a hurricane of libel suits, that technical accuracy was absolutely essential to the defence of such a publication in court. The man had been indicted for embezzlement as a public officer and also for perjury. It was finally arranged that if he pleaded guilty to the indictment for embezzlement and accepted punishment for that offence the prosecution for perjury would not be pressed. Of course he could not have been guilty of embezzlement as a public officer without being both morally and legally guilty of perjury, but he had not been "convicted of perjury," as the despatch stated, and the indictment for that offence had been abandoned. A genial constable from away up in the mountains, after introducing himself to the editor-in-chief, politely exhibited a warrant of arrest for criminal libel. The case had to be tried in a distant county, where partisanship is often visible in the jury-box as well as in political contests, and this technical error of a correspondent, for whom the editor-in-chief had to answer, promised the exhilarating achievement of landing the editor-in-chief in jail. The case attracted much attention in the community. An ex-governor, an ex-attorney-general, and an ex-president-judge appeared in the sanctuary of justice to defend the editor-in-chief for an offence that he had never thought of committing.

The boasted bulwark of our liberties, the right of trial by a jury of peers, was beautifully illustrated in this case. Six of the jurors were known, from the beginning of the case, as warmly in sympathy with the prosecution,—their political and personal environment made that manifest to every one who intelligently understood the situation,—but the other half of the jurors were regarded as unprejudiced and likely to insist upon a just verdict. The trial was warmly contested, and the ex-governor and the ex-attorney-general liberally enlightened the court on the law, the ex-president-judge made one of his most eloquent appeals to the jury, and an able and rather manly public prosecutor closed the case with an argument that forcibly presented what was denominated in the bond by the law itself. A learned judge charged with the utmost impartiality, and the case was committed to the jury for its judgment. I need hardly say that six of the jurors promptly and persistently voted to convict the editor-in-chief, and that the other six voted as promptly and persistently to acquit him. After hours of dispute, a verdict was finally reached by what in Pennsylvania is called the rule of "Dutch arbitration"—that is, a compromise of the dispute between the jurors. Each side finding that the other would not yield, a middle ground was finally chosen upon which all could stand, by rendering a verdict of "not guilty, but the defendant to pay the costs." One

half of the jury gained the point of acquittal; the other half of the jury gained the point of qualifying the acquittal by putting the cost of prosecution on the acquitted defendant.

Libel suits have become one of the important incidents in the life of every editor-in-chief of sufficient importance to attract public attention or to make a newspaper read by the public, and but for the generous sense of justice that the law extends to the editor-in-chief, by protecting him from punishment for others' wrongs as far as it can be done with public safety, there is not an editor-in-chief of the daily newspapers in Pennsylvania who would not be fined or imprisoned every year of his life, unless newspapers ceased to be newspapers. Thus the chief distinction of the editor-in-chief in these days is, first of all he is responsible for the general tone and expression of his newspaper columns, and next he is responsible for the countless utterances of others which he cannot dictate or revise. If he is a sensitive man, he is likely to lose his appetite every day over the first meal he takes after reading his own newspaper ; and if he is not a sensitive man, he is likely to land himself in jail by his neglect of caution about the things which are written and published in his name. But, with all its unpleasant embarrassments, I regard it as the most important position that a man can attain under our free institutions. The editor-in-chief of a widely read and respected daily newspaper holds

the highest public trust under our government of the people. It is the most responsible office to which an American can aspire. Parties rise and fall ; Presidents come and go ; Cabinets gather and scatter ; Senators and Representatives fill their brief missions and pass away ; but the daily newspaper continues through all the swift changes in politics and society, ever teaching and ever ennobling mankind if faithful to its sacred duties, and its influence, although often unseen and apparently unfelt, is as constant as the genial rays of the sun, that bursts the seed and ripens the harvest.



THE MANAGING EDITOR



THE MANAGING EDITOR.

BY JULIUS CHAMBERS.

“THE Managing Editor is the mainspring of the American newspaper,” says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. This is an accurate and concise description, for he it is who makes the daily journal. His character, his energy,—representing all the nervous force that he possesses,—his experience, and, above all, his intuition, are devoted to the successful prosecution of his work. He it is who is responsible for the “circulation”; and the rise or fall in the journal’s popularity is the supreme test by which he must be judged. Such is the dictum at present recognized in the metropolis, however just or unjust it may be. There is no forgiveness for the man who makes a mistake: he must always do the proper thing at a critical moment. Hardly a day passes in which he is not called upon—often at the hour of going to press—to choose between the right and the wrong lines of policy. He cannot wait until the following day! The paper must go to press! “To print, or not

to print!" that is the question. It is easy to select the winners in a horse-race after the event has been run off, or to announce an advance in stocks after the rise has occurred; but one has only to try to foresee these results and to back his opinions before the bell rings or as soon as the Exchange opens, to understand how difficult it is to be right even half the time. The "speculating" may be done secretly, and a loss may be accepted with the same grace that one endures the sacrifice of his pride. But realize how different is the position of an executive chief of a newspaper from the head of a commercial business! If the latter man make an error, he is able to conceal the fact from the general public. As a matter of history, thousands of egregious blunders are committed in the mercantile transactions of the most successful commercial firms every year, any half-dozen of which would fatally wreck a newspaper. Every act of the managing editor shows on the printed page. He works in a glass house, and the scurviest critic can throw a stone at him.

The anxious period in the office of a daily paper is the hour before going to press. The news of the day rarely "comes to a head" before midnight. Any one unacquainted with the daily history of the morning newspaper would be astonished to know how few events reach the editor's desk before dark sets in, compared with the number that arrive thereafter.

This is largely owing to the new order of things that has grown up since the rise of the afternoon journal.

Theoretically, the afternoon paper is the American journal of the future. The greater portion of the civilized world is more than three thousand miles to the eastward of this country, and longitude and time operate for the especial benefit of the afternoon newspaper. The difference in time between London and New York is over five hours, and a little enterprise will enable an afternoon journal to report in its last edition all that occurs in London up to 8 o'clock. We now have six-o'clock editions that contain the results of all the sporting events throughout this country, and there is no reason why, with improved facilities for circulating the newspaper, there should not be even later editions. *La Correspondencia*, of Madrid, prints an edition at ten o'clock at night, and it is the most successful journal in the Spanish capital. Its press-rooms are filled with Marinoni and Hoe machines. Its web-perfecting presses are equal to those of the best metropolitan dailies. Its only European rival, from a business point of view, is *Le Petit Journal*, of Paris. That is a paper limited in its circulation only by the mechanical facilities for its production. It is the journal to which the French wit referred when he said, "It is printed to-day, dated to-morrow, and contains the news of the day before yesterday." True,

Sir Critic ; but it circulates for ever and a day ! Its various editions are descending like the locusts of Egypt upon the provinces of France. It can be purchased everywhere on the Continent within a radius of one thousand miles of Paris on the date of its alleged publication. More than three quarters of a million copies are sold every day. And yet it would not live a week in the United States. It would never reach the self-supporting stage. The experiment has been tried, without success.

The American newspaper of to-day is the product of fifty years of experiment and observation. In every case, the successful American journal has been built upon "sensationalism" ; but it has been found that, once established, absolute accuracy and truth are the only bases of enduring success. From present appearances, the coming newspaper will combine the energy of the New York *Herald*, the scholarly qualities of the New York *Sun*, and the thorough credibility of the Philadelphia *Ledger*.

The newspapers of to-day are much better written than they were ten years ago. An ordinary "space" reporter of to-day excels in cleverness the "staff" special writer of twenty years ago.

Beyond any question, the reporter is the coming man on the American newspaper. Look at what he has done for the city editor ! He has raised him from an obscure position to the

second place on the editorial staff. If present appearances are to be accepted, in another ten years the metropolitan journals will be almost exclusively devoted to local news, and the city editor will be "cock of the walk." Every New York newspaper-man will understand to what journal I refer, and will agree with me that in abandoning all its traditions about the value of foreign news it took a great step forward in circulation and prestige.

And this brings me to the most interesting theory which I venture to advance regarding the building up of a newspaper's circulation. It is no longer credible that news, merely, will do it. Nor will a bright editorial page insure success. One piece of exclusive information that will be talked about is worth a month's conscientious presentation of the current incidents in the world's history. Not to put too fine a point on it, eccentricities—"freaks," if you please—are what bring new readers to a paper. I know that this is very radical ground to take and should be more fully explained. But this is not the place, and the examples that I would cite in justification of my opinions might be invidious. An advertisement is a mental impression, and the only advertising field open to the newspaper is the provocation of criticism or praise by its treatment of eccentricities of human life. It is the Dickensish flavor in the modern journal that brings it new and "curious" readers. The paper

must, of course, be reasonably good to keep a new friend once found ; but success in journalism depends largely upon the accession of new readers. It will be a surprise to the novice to learn that with many of the best established weekly journals the proportion of annual "renewals" is less than twenty-five per cent. To maintain the circulation, editors have to lasso seventy-five per cent. of new readers every year. And, strange to say, this is not a difficult task, for the man who knows how to accomplish it. But that is a secret of the business.

I have digressed, and have spoken of some of the causes that influence a newspaper's prosperity, simply because, under the code that now obtains, the managing editor is held responsible for the rise or the fall in circulation. Though the presses may break down, though a horse harnessed to a delivery wagon may fall in the street and a mail be missed, though a correspondent who is called upon only once a year may fail to respond, the managing editor alone is responsible, and, like the mythical person who is daily called upon to come forward and say why every marriage shall not be performed, he must either speak up or forever hold his peace. The next day will be twenty-four hours too late. The idea will then belong to the "might have been."

The managing editor is not only "the main-spring of the daily newspaper," but he is expected to keep the machinery in motion without having

anybody to wind him up. He is expected to arrive early and stay late. Two o'clock in the afternoon is thought to be the proper hour for him to make his appearance. He has then read all the morning papers, has mapped out his campaign for the day, and has an accurate idea of the probable occurrences of the coming twenty-four hours. He then summons the city editor and looks over his plans for gathering the local news, as shown on the schedule of occurrences that he has mapped out. Despatches are next sent to the four corners of the country, ordering reports of the foreshadowed events. But all this work is the mere A B C of the managing editor's duties.

He must absolutely originate something every day.

The public, and very often his chief (the proprietor), expect the Bastille to fall every twenty-four hours. This, unfortunately for the managing editor's peace of mind, does not happen; he must, therefore, devise original methods of treatment for commonplace occurrences.

For example, to refer to a modern instance, the centenary of President Washington's coming to New York was celebrated in a three days' *fête* in 1889. As a general rule, the newspapers of the country confined their attentions to a long and detailed account of the proposed celebration, copied chiefly from the circulars of the committees having the affair in hand. The

managing editor of one metropolitan paper, however, did not believe in "leading up" to the great event in that way. He hoped to really interest the readers of his journal in the affair. To that end, he sent a capable correspondent and an artist with a stage and four horses to Mount Vernon. The correspondent was furnished with a carefully prepared itinerary of General Washington's ride from his home to Elizabethport, New Jersey. He was told to make the journey, day by day, as the Father of his Country had made it,—to stop where the hero had rested, to dine and take luncheon at the same places that Washington had dined and taken luncheon,—in short, to duplicate, hour for hour, and day for day of the same month (a century only intervening), the memorable trip. A series of rarely interesting letters was the result of this idea. Thousands of people who could not have been induced even to glance at the usual retelling of the history as found in Irving and Sparks were induced to read it eagerly. It seemed part of the news of the day.

As the simplest methods are always the best, this one was especially effective.

The account of an actual experience in an office when I was a youngster in the business will illustrate the ingenuity expected of the executive of a newspaper in a moment of great emergency. I merely relate the incident to show that the value of a competent man on the managing desk of a

great newspaper in an emergency is beyond any estimate that can be shown by a yearly salary.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning when all New York learned that Boston, the pride of the nation, was in flames. A fire had broken out about eight o'clock on the previous night (November 9, 1872), and the morning journals contained more or less comprehensive reports of a disastrous conflagration ; but it was not until the following day—so beautiful a day that every newspaper man then in harness remembers it well—that the appalling character of the calamity was learned. The fire burned nearly all of that Sunday.

By the earliest trains, each New York journal sent several of its best correspondents to the burning city. When these men arrived they found the telegraphic service utterly awry. No matter how cleverly they described the ravages of the fire, their despatches could not be got to New York. Thackeray said, many years ago, "It is one thing to write a book, and another to get it printed." Later, when the special correspondent rose to greatness, he might have paraphrased the remark so as to make it read, "It is one thing to get news, and another to get it to market." The special correspondents at Boston on that occasion worked under the greatest difficulties.

In New York, the anxiety in every newspaper office was maddening. What paper would have the most complete report on Monday morning?

There was no disputing the universal demand for information regarding the disaster. Aside from the vast business interests, directly involving every mercantile house that sold a dollar's worth of goods in Boston, a deeply rooted, sentimental regard for that city existed in every household of the New World. Chicago had wellnigh suffered obliteration the year before. Now the curse had passed to Boston. "Do we come next?" thought every New-Yorker. But in the country at large the primal idea was that a city sacred to the American heart was doomed. The whole eastern part of the continent responded. Fire-bells were rung in every town between Portland and Providence. Special trains carried engines from Albany and Hartford. The whole country awaited the tidings of Boston's fate. Preachers spoke of the impending blight in their Sunday-morning services, and the great Beecher, with tears in his eyes, read from his pulpit a message from the apparently lost city. People solemnly stood in groups on the streets of New York and conversed in whispers about what appeared to be an impending national calamity.

Must they give up the old State House, Faneuil Hall, the "Old South Church," State Street, in which was the massacre, Christ Church, too, from whose spire glittered the lantern that Paul Revere saw, and, seeing, "galloped off into the night to summon America"? They were not treasures of Boston alone. She had been only

their custodian. They belonged to the whole country. They were all menaced! The ground on which had stood the birthplace of Franklin, the church of Channing, and the famous old Roman Catholic cathedral, had already been swept by the flames.

Who could do justice to such a theme in a newspaper article? And, with all the capacity in the human mind to describe what he saw, who could get his written matter through to New York when the wires were in confusion?

Ah! it *is* one thing to get news, and another to get it printed.

Of all the information desired, the most valuable was a list of the business firms destroyed. To get that seemed utterly hopeless, until the acting managing editor of the *Tribune* put his mind to the problem. He then saw his way to completely supply this want.

By dark, the limits of the fire had been accurately ascertained to be Summer, Washington, Milk, and Broad Streets. The entire city staff had been summoned, and sat at their desks awaiting orders. Boston was two hundred and fifty-six miles away! The instant definite information regarding the fire-limit was received, the work began.

A large map of Boston lay on the desk of the managing editor. With a blue pencil, the fire-area was carefully outlined. A list of the streets or parts of streets destroyed was rapidly prepared.

Two men expert in the use of a city directory and well acquainted with Boston were able to decide what numbers the houses bore in each of the destroyed thoroughfares. Every reader of this page who has had occasion to consult the street index at the back of any city directory will comprehend the method.

The fire had been confined to the business portion of the city. Early in the evening the latest Boston business directory had been procured at one of the express offices by a liberal present to a night watchman. The precious volume was carefully torn into equal sections, and apportioned among thirty reporters. In the case of long thoroughfares, like Washington Street, extending far beyond the fire-limits, it was easy to ascertain the numbers of the houses destroyed by a reference to the street directory. But the really artistic work was done on streets that were burned only on one side. It is quite easy to locate, from a directory, with the aid of a map, the side of a street on which are the odd or the even numbers. For example, only one side of State Street was destroyed. It was a very easy thing to pick out the names of the insurance companies and offices that lined the burned side of that thoroughfare.

A complete list of the streets along the fire-line was set up and printed on a proof-slip. Let us suppose it to have read like this:

Juniper Street, from No. 281 to 342.

Puritan Street, even numbers only, from No. 84 to 126.

State Street, odd numbers only, from No. 19 to 97.

With these proofs before him, each man went through his ten leaves of the directory and selected all the names on any of the prescribed streets within and including the numbers set down. There were forty thoroughfares more or less injured, so it will be comprehended that the men were alert and capable. They put a blue mark before each name as they detected it by its tell-tale address at the right hand side of each column. The pages went direct to the printers, who set only the names that had the Fatima's cross opposite them. Then the sheets were returned to the staff of reporters, who marked with a red cross any new names to be added to the list because of a further spread of the fire. A third marking, if rendered necessary, was made with green lead.

The classification by trades was necessarily perfect because arranged in the directory, and under each business subdivision the list was alphabetical. Excepting in the cases of firms that had failed between the issuance of the directory and its use, there were no errors. The list of sufferers as prepared in New York was even more accurate than could have been compiled in Boston amid the attendant excitement. It made a page of the most intensely valuable

and interesting reading to every business man in the country, and anticipated by a week the official statement,—which, by the way, had quite as many errors in it as the list prepared in three hours at the *Tribune* office. It was a managing editor's night !

I have always regarded that work as the cleverest I ever saw done by a managing editor.

The mystery of mysteries in the newspaper world for years has been how the *Herald* scored its great "beat" in 1887 by printing the President's message in full on the morning of the day it was sent to the Senate. True, other papers had brief extracts from the message in their second editions, but a censorious public credited them with stealing the matter from their contemporary.

Some managing editors are born with a "nose for news"; others achieve "beats"; but I doubt if many men in that position can boast of having a great news feature literally thrust upon them. The secret has been hinted at but never told by the chief participants. Perhaps there is a moral in it for every managing editor as well as for every reader of a newspaper.

It was at the end of a very dull night. Great events generally occur on dull nights. The Associated Press had received information that the *Herald* had surreptitiously obtained a complete copy of President Cleveland's message and intended to print it in full in the morning. As

the Associated Press was the custodian of the message, which was to have been sent on the following day to every afternoon customer, this announcement naturally filled its local manager in New York with consternation. Where that rumor came from, and how it reached the Associated Press, is still a mystery.

As the "A. P." was the accredited custodian of the message, it would never do to permit its premature publication, if it could be prevented. Bad faith would surely be charged. It must be suppressed at once. The night manager of that news agency took his hat and rushed across the street. A pneumatic tube connects all the offices belonging to the Association, but the gentleman preferred to go in person. He descended by the elevator in the Western Union building, and was soon climbing the iron stairs in the *Herald* office. A moment later, out of breath, he had demanded an audience with the editor in charge. This is about what occurred :

"I understand that the *Herald* has obtained the President's message in some underhand way, and intends publishing it to-morrow, before it has been delivered to Congress."

"Indeed !"

"Now, you must not do this. The *Herald* is a member of the Associated Press, and the honor of the Association is pledged not to circulate this message until to-morrow afternoon."

"Well, really," said the diplomatic editor,

who was intensely mystified and inclined to await developments, "what you may or may not do is of very little consequence to the *Herald*, and I can assure you will not influence it in the least."

"But I have it from the very best authority that you already have the message in this office and are setting it up."

"Suppose we have the message: what then?" and the editor excused himself, and went out, ostensibly to consult with some one, but in reality to catch his breath and consider the situation, for, as may be imagined, somebody had been imposing on the Associated Press agent. The *Herald* did not have and did not expect to have the message ahead of its circulation by the Association. After a few turns in the *Herald's* big library-room, the editor decided on a line of policy. He returned to the press agent and informed him that the *Herald* would not think of changing any of its plans, even though the Association were "beaten."

"Very well," said the visitor, rising to go; "if that be the case, the only thing we can do is to send out the message to-night, even at the expense of breaking faith with the President. Our customers must be properly served."

This was as the executive editor had hoped. He sent for the foreman of the composing-room, and instructed him to be in readiness to set an extra page at a late hour, as it was expected that

the President's message would come in. Sure enough, about one o'clock that night in it came!

The editor hurried it to the composing-room, and subheaded it, sheet by sheet, as it went out. Result, the *Herald* had a page of the President's message set, read, corrected, and in the form before two o'clock, while the other papers, not being prepared to handle it, coming unannounced as it did at so late an hour, could only use a few disconnected paragraphs from the important document. The *Herald*, thanks to the editor in charge that night, scored a fine "beat"; but that Associated Press agent probably has congratulated himself for years at having partially defeated the machinations of an enterprising newspaper.

The moral of managing editors in this incident is not to believe all you hear, or confess all you do not know.

In conclusion, journalism is the most promising of all means of livelihood in youth, and the least satisfactory in its results. It enables a man to earn a living almost from the first; but it rarely does more at any stage of his career, no matter how large his salary.

The position of a managing editor, by whatever title he be known, is fraught with great (I had almost written awful) responsibility and ceaseless anxiety, but rarely results in bringing happiness to an incumbent of the chair. It is

generally a post of duty under an uplifted axe. One error will ruin any executive editor. Two years is the average span of his official life. And, when inevitable fate o'ertakes him, his past achievements are often forgotten. Then naught remains to him beyond the respect of his fellow-workers. If he have the supreme consciousness that no man who may outlast him can truthfully describe him as "cowardly" or "purchasable," he has attained the fullest measure of earthly happiness to which any managing editor has a right to aspire.



THE CITY EDITOR



THE CITY EDITOR.

WITH SOME REPORTORIAL EXPERIENCES.

BY A. E. WATROUS.

THE city editor is the man who says twenty thousand words about his neighbors every morning. Good news is no news, and most of the twenty thousand words are disagreeable ones. It is the city editor's duty, then, before all men, to be circumspect about the pains and penalties in such cases made and provided. The news or telegraph editor says more things than the city editor, and generally more disagreeable things, but he does not say them about his neighbors. He says them, as a general thing, about people who do not know he is saying them. The chief editorial writer says more important things than either the news or city editor, and says them in a more elaborately disagreeable and authoritative way, but he says them about a class of people whose principal function in life is to have things said about them; that is to say, that callous and case-hardened class known as Public Men, whom the

laws and Constitution strip of the right of self-defence, and who remind the quizzical observer of affairs in a free country of the rows of puppets at a country fair whom everybody has the right of pelting at five cents a pelt. The puppets are continually hit ; they are continually knocked down ; they always reappear smiling by a simple but invisible and ingenious device which is known in mechanics as a spiral spring and in public life as a Pull.

To illustrate more clearly the functions and responsibility of these three executive heads of the editorial or "up-stairs" half of a newspaper : If the news editor describes in glowing hues the career of a metropolitan adventuress, the only antagonistic interest aroused is a mild wonder on the part of the personage in question as to how the newspapers "got on to" her. If the chief editorial writer decides that a certain Public Personage has broken every law in the U. S. Revised Statutes, every principle of political morality, every promise in the party platform, and every pledge in his letter of acceptance, the person most grievously hurt is the private personage who keeps the Public Personage's scrap-book and by such decision has his weighty labors added to. But if the city editor should happen to say that Lawyer Muggins has filed papers in divorce in behalf of Grocer Buggins against Mrs. Buggins, and it should turn out that Lawyer Muggins had only drawn the papers

and sent them by his clerk to be filed and the clerk had loitered in one of the inns about the court and had arrived thereat too late to file the papers, then would it be conclusively proved to Grocer and Mrs. Buggins that each had grounds for a libel suit, in which belief Lawyer Muggins and his clerk would undoubtedly concur ; to the chief editorial writer, that the city news was so unreliable that he did not dare trust himself to comment upon it ; to the editor-in-chief, that such extraordinary recklessness showed an amount of indiscretion sufficient to warrant the reorganization of the department ; to the manager, that such carelessness damaged the property ; to the friends of the Bugginses, that the newspapers ought to be suppressed ; to the managing editor, that we've been rather unlucky lately ; and to the other newspapers, that you are a "daily fake" or a "mendacious contemporary."

It therefore follows that the city editor becomes an expert on the seamy side of newspaper life, a connoisseur in libel suits, corrections, retractions, and the relations of the newspaper, not to the public, but to the individual. As one of this class of experts, though perhaps the least of the class, the fact that has struck me with the greatest force in the relation of the newspaper to the individual is the utter inadequacy of the present libel law to protect either party to that interminable quarrel. In closely following the

numerous attempts in this and other States so to amend that law as to afford the now notoriously inadequate protection, I have come to the fixed conclusion that the only way to amend the libel law is to abolish it. If it were abolished it would have to be replaced. There is but one thing which can replace it,—a press censorship.

This is a startling, a sweeping, a perhaps impracticable and apparently reactionary proposition. But let us think what the present libel law is. An engine for the oppression of decent citizens and conscientious journals. A harbor of refuge for the expert purveyor of filth in journalism. A club in the hands of the bravo and adventurer. On the newspaper side of the question, I doubt if a single capitalist could be induced to invest a single dollar in a newspaper enterprise if he knew what a mediæval instrument for the suppression of truth the libel law is. Every day we see cable despatches portraying the hardships of English editors under English law. The law of England as to civil suits is the law of Pennsylvania. The common-law decision that a woman who is called a bawd and simply proved to be a procuress is entitled to damages stands to-day in this State, and in most States of the Union. It is no defence to prove a man ten thousand times blacker than he has been painted. He must be conclusively shown to have been of exactly the same shade. If you have thrown a soft crimson reflection on his character, it will

not aid you to say you might have made a fierce scarlet. This is the law to which respectable moneyed and business men, the owners of newspapers, and conscientious, clean, and upright professional men, the writers of them, are amenable in the year of grace 1890. This is but a joint, a cog in this monstrous engine of oppression, devised as it was for the suppression of a free press, and since unchanged by a single relieving statute or decision.

On the other hand, the condition of the individual is, if anything, worse than that of the newspaper. The worst wrongs that the newspaper of to-day can inflict and does daily inflict can be brought under no measure of civil damages. Let me illustrate. A short time ago a respectable and generally careful newspaper, which claims and possesses an enormous daily circulation, published as a fact in the leading news article on its first page that a whole class of securities, in which hundreds of its own constituents had invested hundreds of thousands of dollars, was worthless. It did so upon the testimony of an anonymous individual who had paid a flying visit to the section of the country in which the investments in question were made. The anxiety, the sleepless nights, the distrust of all investments, caused by this careless use of a great function, are simply incalculable ; but, as this journal had erroneously charged not man but the elements with the depreciation of these

Indefinite
✓ securities, there was and can be no legal redress for this unsettling of the financial world. Under a discreet press censorship a fine of ten thousand dollars would be a light penalty for such an offence, and a repetition of its commission would be followed by a suppression of the newspaper. Another case which has attracted wide attention is the practical murder of a once distinguished New York physician by a "sensational" New York newspaper. In his tottering mind there was a great, morbid horror of publicity. That newspaper gave him four columns of it, and he went and hanged himself. A discreet press censorship would have allotted to the man or men who had an individual participation in that publication the term of imprisonment prescribed by the law for any other homicide. But under the "law of evidence" (that quaint antiquated instrument for the extinction of the spirit and the survival of the letter, the devilish ingenuity of which I, from my adolescence in a law office to this day, have admired as a modern mechanic may admire the thumb-screws or the iron boot in the Tower) that death could not be laid at the door of the men who wrought it. Yet some newspaper will suffer for that crime,—not the newspaper in question, but some newspaper a thousand miles east or west or north or south, which has been innocently misled into saying that a parricide was a simple murderer, or that a forger was a pickpocket, but which will be

duly mulcted in damages and costs because the judge and jury and the people think that "the newspapers" are "growing too bold."

It is plain, therefore, that it is impossible to assess the most serious damages that a newspaper can inflict. Under the conditions of modern life, the common law cannot protect the individual from the unscrupulous or reckless newspaper. Let us glance at some of the propositions to protect the newspaper from the individual. One which is frequently insisted on by a high authority is to make a security for costs a preliminary to the institution of a libel suit. This might do away with a small percentage of speculative libel suits, but would not prevent the institution of a single spiteful one. Another is the allowance of the plea of retraction in mitigation of damages. It is not the assessment of damages, which is a trade risk, which is most hurtful to a newspaper in an unsuccessful litigation, but the loss of prestige and incitement of other suits. Still another provides that express malice shall be shown in order to carry punitive damages. The intricate and inexact common law leans somewhat in this direction now, but all experience teaches that a jury will hang a very large verdict on very small proof of express malice. The amendment which has been most loudly advocated in one quarter relieves the publisher of all liability and places it solely on the writer. Personally, I, in common with most writers, I

think, would welcome this amendment. The dignified retirement of the second tier for the three months following a plea of guilty would be heaven compared with the month or so of nervous strain consequent upon the preparation and trial of a libel suit. But the proposition to relieve the principal beneficiary of an offence from all responsibility for its commission is so inherently absurd as to call for no comment, adverse or otherwise. Still another device is to make the source of a newspaper's information solely liable for its correctness. This would be to destroy the press as an institution and make it a more or less foul conduit of rumor.

It therefore follows, I take it, that the law of the land is quite incompetent to protect the newspaper from the unscrupulous individual.

Let us, then, frankly acknowledge that the law of the land is incompetent to deal with the relations of the individual to the newspaper. Long, long since we practically acknowledged its incompetency to deal with the relations of the public man and the newspaper, by giving the latter comparative immunity for anything it might publish concerning the former. Let us erect an extra-judicial body which shall, with the approval of the legislative body, create its own code. Let it be composed of one journalist, one lawyer, and one man of affairs. Let it define exactly, after mature deliberation and the hearing of all sides, exactly what the functions of a

newspaper are, and let it protect its use of those functions and punish its abuse. I am quite aware of the clack and clatter which any newspaper advocating this reform would meet. We would hear first of "the constitutional right of trial by jury." The gentlemen of the long robe are making that constitutional right such a public scandal that it is a question if it long survives ; but grant its immortality,—the American Constitution is about the most elastic thing in the cosmos. For three months of every year in the city of Philadelphia a court sits which tries the moral character and claims to good citizenship of three thousand men, finds more than half of them wanting, stamps them as wanting, is sustained by the law and public opinion in so doing, and does it all without the aid of "the jury system" or "the law of evidence." No press censorship could be more arbitrary than the License Courts of Philadelphia and Pittsburg ; and yet if a press censorship when erected should accomplish one half the good that the License Courts have done, newspaper and individual alike would rise up and call it blessed. The times are ripening for a change. The murmurs of the people are loud. The press of the country is attempting to deal to-day with assaults upon its liberties in the courts. It may soon have to deal with them in the legislatures. When a good general knows the ground on which an impending battle is to be fought, he occupies the ground.

That newspapers print all they know, is a popular belief held by nearly every one.

That newspapers print more than they know, is a vulgar belief held by that large and ignorant portion of every community which does not read newspapers to be informed, but to be interested and, if possible, shocked.

That newspapers print all that they hear, is a supposition entertained by the people who bring what they think is news to newspaper-offices.

That newspapers print nothing that they hear from irresponsible sources, without investigation, is the truth, known to all trained newspaper-men. That they do not print all they know, is known also to all trained newspaper-men. That they do not print more than from one tenth to one half of what they know, is the truth ; and it is known only to one or two men in every newspaper-office, whose business it is to decide whether a "story" is worth "following out," and whether, after "following out," it is proper for publication. Even these men, unless they are of an introspective and retrospective turn of mind, do not realize the enormous quantity of chaff they winnow for the public's daily loaf.

Fierce as competition is, there could to-day be started in every large city of the East a newspaper which would outstrip every other newspaper in the vital interest of its news by simply printing what the other newspapers

refused to print. This news would all of it, too, be within legal and conventional bounds of decency.

Then why not start such a newspaper? will be asked. Such newspapers have been started in plenty, but none were sustained.

The reason, simple though seemingly paradoxical, is that the stock in trade of every solidly established newspaper is the news it does not print. In other words, confidence is the source of every piece of really valuable news; and to maintain that confidence and obtain that news the newspaper-man must daily sacrifice a vast amount of readily printable and vastly readable matter the publication of which would cut him off from his sources of supply.

This is the reason why the newspaper-man is the best confidant in the world. He cannot betray confidences in type, for fear of cutting off future supplies of news. He cannot betray them in speech, for fear that some one else will betray them in type and thereby expose him to the reproaches both of the source of his news and the source of his income.

If the theory be not conclusive, let me call a witness to the fact. I may not do so by name, —too many thousands know it,—but I may describe the witness as a man who for a dozen years has been connected with the administration of justice in one of the great Eastern cities. His language was: "I have always taken news-

paper-men into my confidence, and I have been betrayed but once."

In that dozen years that man had seen and talked to a dozen newspaper-men a day. The confidence to which he admitted them was the most salable and the most printable imaginable. The eminence of his position made mention of his name in print a finger-board which would halt the attention of the most careless newspaper-reader. The nature of it would make any secret he could reveal of startling interest. He had probably never laid the injunction of secrecy on any one of the men to whom he had talked. They intuitively understood what was for print and what was not ; and but one of them had broken faith. In that dozen years that man had seen a hundred lawyers break faith with everything in heaven and earth but their clients' interests. He had seen doctors by the dozen prostitute knowledge and pervert science to save the lives or liberties of wretches with "position" to shield them or with money to pay an "expert's" fee. He had come into contact scores of times with that curious obliquity of vision of the clergy which prevented them so often from observing the age and condition of persons joined by them in wedlock that a remedy had to be applied by statute in their State, to the profitable scandalizing of the cloth in New Jersey. Yet he had observed only a single dishonorable action on the part of the

newspaper-craft. This certainly was not because the newspaper-men were less full of human frailty than their brethren of the professions which are called learned. It was simply because those men who were tempted to betray his confidence could not afford to do so.

So strong does this habit of secrecy become in some men that it on occasions destroys their news-sense. "I must get out of this position at once," said a political editor and correspondent to me; "I am getting stoop-shouldered with confidences."

Sometimes, again, a confidence is forced on a newspaper-man in such a way that he has to grin and bear it while news of the finest quality which has long been in his possession is printed in some rival paper. The most maddening instance of this sort that ever came under my observation was where a newspaper-man of my acquaintance was visited by a member of a foreign political and secret organization,—the Carbonari, let us call it. "My life is conspired against," said this friend, "by members of a rival faction in our order. I must take some steps to defeat their ends, or they will surely kill me. It is against the law of the Carbonari for a member to communicate with the Piedouche detective agency, who are known to be in the pay of the Italian government. But the help of the Piedouche I must have. They are the only men who can ferret this thing out.

You must put me into communication with them. You can readily see why this must not be published."

To have refused this favor to the hunted man would have been unthinkable. The newspaper-man complied,—and for weeks had the misery of seeing the plot (for actual plot it was) unravelled by the skill of the Piedouche. Count Fosco's taking-off was scarcely a less wonderful web of skilled malignity than that which the skill of the Piedouche foiled. Finally, when the "story" was almost ripe, the climax almost ready, the newspaper-man came down to his office one morning, reached for the pile of rival papers laid ready for inspection on his desk, and saw, in job type, on the front page of the first one he laid hands on, the caption of the drama of which he had been a confidential spectator for a month. I think that if on that day his father had murdered his mother before the eyes of him alone he would have written the story with his own hand and then delivered his parent to the police in order to verify it.

The confidences of criminals to newspaper-men are the drollest, in their complete ingenuousness and simple trust, of all confidences. I once knew a burglar who in an interval of pauperized reform had been befriended by a reporter. When he returned to his proper vocation he bethought him of his newspaper friend, and, seeking him, offered to inform him

of the location of his first job, in order that he might be on hand and describe the operation with a knowledge of the details which would aid his technique. He was surprised and pained when his friend stopped his recital and pointed out that he would have to communicate any such information to the police, and was pacified only when he was reminded that, as all burglaries were reported to the police, it would be impossible for his friend to have a "beat" on the news, and that, as the hour at which burglaries were committed was after the hour when the reporter's paper stopped taking copy, the advantage derived from a personal participation in the offence would hardly compensate for its risks.

This man, of course, was ignorant, and a member of what may be called the middle class of criminals. I have known an instance of as absolute a trust in one of the most elegant and accomplished criminals known to the Rogues' Gallery. He was an adventurer of polished manners and glib tongue. Wandering far into the West, he gained, before he openly identified himself with the criminal class, a Territorial office of responsibility. In the course of his duties he became well acquainted with a taciturn, able newspaper man, whose discretion he had occasion frequently to observe. Years afterwards they met in a big Western town. The former official was, by this time, appar-

ently a man of vast but quite invisible means of support. "I am working the gold-brick game," he said, frankly. "I would like you to come into it; but, if you prefer to remain poor but honest, I can tell you at least how we did up an old cockatoo here to-day for seventeen thousand dollars. You can wait till we get out of town, then go to the police, tell them you're 'on' to the story, make them admit it, and then get a beat on the town." As in the working of the gold-brick game the swindled person always believes himself to be a receiver of stolen goods, the clever participant in a most profitable crime, the newspaper-man had no scruples about pledging secrecy until his versatile friend had got out of harm's way,—when he published the story, which was, of course, a "beat."

So much for the confidences of the predatory. Let us pass to those of the priestly. One night, not many months ago, two men met at the door of a metropolitan newspaper-office. One was coming out, the other was going in. They recognized each other with some difficulty, so slight was their acquaintance, exchanged salutations, and then, upon the incomer's informing the outgoer that the purpose of his call was a visit to him, passed up the street in earnest conversation. One might not have known that one of the pair was an editor, but he never would have missed naming the other as an ecclesiastic. For two squares they strolled, the churchman

doing most of the talking, the newsman listening and throwing in an occasional word. Then, when their ways parted, they stopped, and the listener took the part of orator. "I will tell you frankly, doctor," he said, "that there is not a newspaper in this country that would not gladly print every word that you propose to say, and not a single one of them would give you the slightest editorial support. You would be just as much liable to church discipline as if you had said it to your bishop in convocation."

"I will think it over," said the divine ; and the two parted.

This was, I think, the most remarkable case of confidence in my observation. The ecclesiastic was rector of one of the largest and oldest parishes in the East. He had seen the newspaper-man but twice before ; yet he put before him a most tempting *morceau* in the way of a "religious sensation," and parted from him on a street-corner, without even the perfunctory enjoinder to secrecy which men lay in imparting the most trivial bit of gossip whose paternity they do not care to own. Of course the question of conscience entered largely into this case. The newspaper-man knew by reputation and admired the clergyman, and did not care to see his useful future sacrificed for a newspaper "scoop."

Lawyers, I think, who carry so much about them that the world may not know, enjoy

the discreet and appreciative confidence of a trusted newspaper-man better than any other class of men, unless it be politicians. If any one experienced court reporter should sit down and indite the history of proceedings that were contemplated but never brought, I fancy that both the fashionable and financial quarters of most large cities would be roofless.

And of the financiers, those confidences of theirs are by all odds, the most droll, and moreover the most dangerous. "Come around and see me at three o'clock to-morrow afternoon," said a broker to a friend of mine recently. "I won't fail till after banking-hours ; so that you can have it all to yourself."

That was the drollest monetary confidence I ever knew. Of the dangerous ones, space will not suffice to speak. It is enough to say that the temptations which beset the money reporter or financial editor to keep his information to himself, instead of imparting it to his paper and his public, are probably the strongest known to modern life. That the financial columns of the great newspapers are pretty generally "straight" is the strongest testimony to the integrity of the youngest of professions that can anywhere be found.

The financial editor who does not die rich is either an ass or a very honest man,—perhaps both—according to the morality of the world of finance. He towers above the ten-story build-

ings of Fourth Street or Wall Street as the ten righteous would have towered above the Oriental architecture of the cities of the plain—had they been found.

All newspaper-men—the expression journalist is tabooed in the trade—are divided by one of the most successful of the six morning daily publishers of Philadelphia into two parts, —“dam editors and drunken reporters.”

I remember some three years and a half back sitting in the Roundabout Club (a pleasant coterie which used to meet in an English chop-house on Thirtieth Street, New York, and which has since followed its predecessors of the Mermaid Tavern and the Kit-Cat Club upon the way of all pleasant coteries) and asking the experienced literatus who sat opposite me, “My dear boy, what are they like?—cabmen?” His answer was such that about a week later I stood for the first time one of “they” before the desk of the city editor of the New York *Star*, at that time the nursery of young and the hospital of old reporters. His manner was so disagreeably different from that of the pleasant gentleman with whom I had taken service immediately after my conversion in the Roundabout Club that I made quite certain of his having heard something against me in the interim. I was mistaken. I had merely struck journalism in one of its great crises.

“Mr. —,” said the disagreeably different

being, with an awful frown, "report immediately to Mr. Cohen, at police head-quarters. There is a big fire in East Fourth Street."

"Ah," I said, "Mr. Cohen, I presume, is a police official?"

The copy-readers about the city room averted their heads from the sight of the catastrophe which they felt sure would follow this fearful display of ignorance.

"No, sir," snapped the city editor: "Mr. Cohen is our police reporter."

I hurled myself up the steps of the elevated railroad, and in three minutes was off.

In that queer foreign quarter of the east side, where through square on square and street on street you may go and hear no English tongue, I suppose the memory of that awful night on which I was thus pitch-forked into journalism lingers yet. I am sure it does with me. Sixteen little flaxen-haired Bohemian girls were carried dead out of the choked stairway in the school of the Redemptorist Fathers, and the wailing of the women in that grimy, dreary east-side police-station I can hear yet. Equally plain is the memory of the quips and jokes of the five men detailed by the *Star* to report the calamity, as they gathered in the musty, damp old newspaper-building opposite police head-quarters to compare notes and receive their allotment of writing from Cohen. They were not heartless or brutal men. I suppose that if a

purse had been made up among the witnesses of the fire for the dead children's burial their contribution would have been ridiculously disproportionate to their means. They were simply glad, nervously glad, over the completion of a difficult and essentially straining piece of work.

I had three quarters of a column in the paper next morning untouched by the copy-reader. I may say, for the benefit of young men who are sick of the law, as I was, or of the counter, or of any one of the divers callings to the drudges in which newspaper life looks alluring, that they will not get their first three quarters of a column into the paper intact unless they have had, as I had, considerable previous experience in narrative writing and a kindly coach like Cohen.

Just now I spoke of a straining piece of work. There was a merry jest going the rounds of the newspapers at the time of President Cleveland's droll elopement to Deer Park, to the effect that one of the reporters who followed him there fainted upon his arrival, of hunger. This was half true. One of the reporters did faint, but it was not of hunger, but of nervous exhaustion; and so I may fairly single out that expedition as an example of a straining piece of work. Its difficulties were imposed by the Buffalonian *mauvaise honte* of Mr. Cleveland. He acted like an elderly countryman who has concealed his

engagement, as he did, gone through a secret marriage, and then fled with his young bride in order to avoid the "shivaree" which in the place of Mr. Cleveland's nativity and breeding, or absence thereof, doubtless signalizes such unions. On this account I was detailed to go from Philadelphia to Baltimore on the morning of the wedding and look into a story that the honeymoon was to begin there. These orders were issued on the midnight before they took effect. I had, of course, put in my regular day since one o'clock in the afternoon. It would have been good sense to go straight home to bed to prepare for an early start, but it would not have been "good journalism." Good journalism's hygienic principle consists in breaking yourself down and then mending yourself up. I got home about my usual time, say three o'clock in the morning, started out at eight, hunted Baltimore all day, and, in answer to a despatch from the Washington bureau-chief of my paper, reported at the capital at six in the evening. There I got orders to follow the bridal party after the wedding. It was supposed that they were going to Deer Park, and about as much as known that they were going somewhere by the Baltimore and Ohio Railway. If they took that line, there were at least three junctions between the capital and the Park whence they might slip off to parts unknown. I went to dinner. For the first time in my life, I was too badly "rattled" to eat.

Two hundred and fifty miles of track, three junctions, a cloud of lying railway witnesses at every junction, all in a strange country, at night, with a presumably bad telegraphic service,—there was every prospect of the President's escaping me ; and if he did, I should be a young man with a brilliant future behind him.

From seven o'clock till nine that night I paced around the Baltimore and Ohio station, having in the first place posted myself on the trains and endeavored vainly to extract any information about the President's arrangements. At the latter hour a cab rolled up, and one of our men—who had come down on the bride-elect's train the night before—jumped out. He had seen the elopement proceeding out of a back gate. One of the Washington bureau-men was on its trail in a fast hansom. We picketed the station front and back, and waited. Half an hour passed, and the bureau-man came up with his foaming horse at a gallop. That man stuttered naturally. He stuttered so much that night that I was in his hansom and had been galloped a mile and a half into the filthy stock-yard suburb which the President had chosen for his wife's place of embarkation before I made out that it was his idea to have me make the Chief Magistrate's special. To my relief, it had gone. I had no stomach for the work, even if I had succeeded in getting a place on the train, which was unlikely. An hour and a half later the

Pacific express was shooting West with seven reporters—all but myself New York and Washington men—on board. Of the anxieties of the night there is no room to speak here. Suffice it to say that when we rushed past the side-tracked special at Deer Park in the drizzling dawn of the next morning, the New York men, being little short of crazy with delight at the signal defeat of the President's manœuvres, crowded on the front platform and waked the drowsing porters and the small army of detectives with three rousing cheers of derision. When we came back to the Park from Oakland, six miles west, the man I speak of fainted. For me the stretch had been one of forty-eight hours, with an intermission of five hours' sleep, and for the others it had doubtless been more severe.

⑥ At the Grant funeral, at President Harrison's inauguration, and on many occasions of minor importance, I have had much longer stretches, but never one so trying. During our stay at the Park we gave the President a very wide berth, except once when he sent for two of us for the publication of congratulations, and another time when he invaded our quarters at the railway station. The information which we wanted was easily obtainable through the Baltimore and Ohio officials.

I am quite aware that our party of seven was subjected to very savage comment at the time. I am also aware that this comment came almost

entirely from journals whose *res angustæ* prevented them from engaging special correspondents. I remember that the most acidulous paragraph I saw in print was on the editorial page of a Philadelphia afternoon paper whose news-columns contained Deer Park despatches obtained at second-hand from Baltimore and Pittsburg. I speak of this merely to point the moral that the reporter, while he is constantly assailed, and has more often than any other man the means to defend himself in his generally intimate knowledge of the points of his adversary's armor, has very rarely a timely chance to retaliate. Here is a very strong case in point. A few years ago a great public institution gave a great dinner to a great Englishman. As is customary in such cases, the reporters came before the feast to get the names of the guests and the other routine details of the occurrence. As is also customary, they deputed one of their number to obtain the information from the chief functionary of the institution, in order to save the functionary the trouble of repetition. The reporter thus deputed was a gentleman by birth and breeding and in association. He was armed with a due card of invitation to the dinner, which had been sent to his paper for the purpose of having the dinner reported and the institution, which, though very old, is quite poor, duly advertised. In addition, he had a note of introduction from his editor-in-chief. The

functionary tore up the note, and said, curtly, "I have nothing for you, sir."

Now, the reason of this gentleman's bad manners was known to all the newspaper world. A week before this occurrence he had been on his physical knees in the city room of a prominent newspaper, procuring the suppression of a scandal, which if published would have hurt his reputation a long way past surgery. The remembrance of the humiliation was the cause of the insult which the reporter swallowed. Yet he knew the facts I speak of, and in half an hour's work for more than one New York paper could have included his adversary in the category of very dead ducks. But he did not do it. There is a very good *lettre-de-cachet* system working in newspaperdom. He got his information elsewhere, and his account next morning of the dinner gave due prominence and credit to the master of the feast. It will not do, of course, for any great journal to avenge the personal affronts received by its subordinates in the pursuit of information in which the public is directly interested.

This is one of the things that a reporter has to pocket, biding meanwhile his time. There is another thing that a large portion of the public expects him to pocket,—that is to say, "tips." I have had some droll experiences in that way. One of them was when an imitation English country gentleman, at whose house the hunt of

which he was president had breakfasted, having shown me over his kennels and stables, was driving me to the station in his T-cart. We had just reached his lodge-gate, when he produced a roll of bills, picked a five-dollar note, I think it was, from them, and said something about my trouble. I did not get angry. I should have been a fool to do so. I simply said what was best : " Pardon me, Mr. — ; we don't do that any more. There was a time when it was done, but we 've done away with it."

" That 's a deuced unique lodge of mine, don't you think ?" he replied. And so the matter dropped.

At another time I met a man in a restaurant who had been elected to an important municipal office. I had written " sketches " of him and other candidates during the campaign, and had attended to the publication of his among a number of portraits. When I congratulated him on his election, he went into his pocket and produced a *porte-monnaie*, from which he took a good-sized gold piece. I laughed, clapped him on the back, told him to put up his money, and offered to drink with him, which offer he accepted. He was a coarse-grained politician, and any other treatment would have been thrown away on him. The funniest case I ever had, though, was once when I went up to a rather squalid bandbox row in Kensington, Philadelphia, to get some facts for the obituary notice

of a man who had served with the dragoons in Mexico and also with the squad of marines who, under command of Colonel Robert E. Lee, battered down the door of John Brown's engine-house. The family was Irish, and evidently quite poor. After I had got enough facts about Sergeant What's-his-name's service to be enabled to fill in his history at the Mercantile Library, I started to go, and was considerably surprised by having the dead man's eldest daughter follow me with an air of mysterious embarrassment to the door. The mystery was explained when she proffered me two twenty-five-cent pieces, and the embarrassment when she apologized for the smallness of the *douceur*. I had the most extraordinary difficulty in getting her to take her money back, and I am convinced that to-day she believes that the reason why I did not take it was because it was not large enough. On another occasion I happened in upon the rector of an historically interesting but exceedingly tumble-down and poverty-stricken church at his lunch-time. His invitation to his table was so hearty and frank that I broke a very good rule and accepted it. I thanked his little wife for her hospitality when the meal was over, and the little man beamingly said that he knew that newspaper-men had a hard time, and that he was glad to be kind to me. I owe that man a grudge, and if I ever catch him in town, I will show him that a newspaper-man has more things

to be thankful for than a cold lunch with a country parson. He shall sup in such company that he shall not, like Tom Tusher, be able, "smug and smooth-shaven, to sing out 'Amen !' at early chapel next morning."

I have let skeletons enough out of the newspaper closet. I will close the door and turn the key. I know that most newspaper reminiscences, especially when they take the form of avowed fiction, tell a very different story from this. The reporter in them is half Monsieur Lecoq and half Victor Hugo. I have merely wished to set down some of the disagreeables that a man of gentle nurture who adopts the profession of journalism is exposed to. I have taken a motto which is now forty years out of date and accepted a classification which is a drolly scurrilous slander. I have said nothing of the other side,—of the freedom of the life, of the rare and choice acquaintances made with all sorts and conditions of men, from bishops to burglars. I have not spoken of the pay, nor sought to correct the general misconception that it is poor. The reporter has such a very intimate acquaintance with the making of public opinion that he holds it when made perhaps cheaper than any other man.

I have in conclusion a single bit of advice to give to the public at large, which I always proffer in cases of individual contact. If you have any information which a reporter wants,

surrender it instantly. He will have it anyway. If he does not get it from you, he will get it elsewhere, and the first man to whom he will go for it will be your deadliest enemy.

Does this seem an idle boast?

"*Doctor,*" said General Grant, when he finished his memorandum of last instructions, and gave them to his physician, "*keep this to yourself. If a single other person sees it, the newspapers will get it.*"



THE HISTORY OF A NEWS DESPATCH



THE HISTORY OF A NEWS DESPATCH.

BY SAMUEL MERRILL.

IT was a windy night in Worcester, Mass.

I mention the fact of the wind, for if the air had been still, there would have been no catastrophe, and this veracious chronicle would have remained in the ink-stand.

It was a windy night, and Chin Sing and his friend Wah Tong kept in the lee of the buildings, as, in Indian file, they sought their home in Harrington Avenue. But as they passed the end of a narrow alley a violent gust swept down and bore away Chin Sing's straight-brimmed, flat-crowned hat. Chin Sing called to his friend to follow him, and hurried in pursuit of his escaping property. In doing so he ran in front of an absent-minded horse, which earned a comfortable living by nightly service in collecting the city's ashes. The flowing skirts and sleeves of the Chinaman frightened the horse, and he accelerated his hitherto sober pace. His driver was walking beside the wagon, and called sharply to the animal to stop. The Chinaman, hearing

the cry, changed his course, endeavoring to repair the damage he had done by waving his arms and conjuring the running horse in eloquent and forcible Chinese to resume his previously deliberate pace.

In vain. The alien saved his precious neck by standing aside, and the four-legged servant of the city, now thoroughly terrified, plunged madly down the street. Driver and Chinaman followed after.

There is no evidence that the horse had any special motive for his course, but he turned to the right at Perry Street and ran down that deserted thoroughfare, now on the sidewalk, now in the middle of the way. At Spruce Street he turned again, perhaps with a vague idea of seeking out his own home at the city stable. But his speed was too rapid, and the radius of his curve too great for streets so narrow, so he surprised himself by running into the ample window of the shop on the corner.

There was a rattling of glass and an overturning of the wagon, and then all was still. The immediate cause of the disturbance found himself penned in between the ends of two counters, unable to advance or turn, and prevented by the debris in the rear from making a retreat. In front of him, upon shelves, were several tins of biscuits. The place in general was the strangest he had ever been in, but the biscuits were familiar friends ; he had often, since enter-

ing the city's employ, found them, mouldy or broken, in barrels of refuse which he was sent to collect at the rear entrances of hotels or bake-shops. He tasted some from the nearest tin. So much fresher and better than any he had ever eaten before. He ate all that were easy of access, and then tried the confectionery. Just as a box, broken and empty, told the fate of five pounds of chocolate caramels, the driver came upon the scene, closely followed by the Chinaman.

The door of the bakeshop was locked, and the tail-board of the cart blocked the opening in the window. The driver set to work in an effort to extricate the vehicle and horse, but with very inefficient co-operation on the part of the latter, who found his position more agreeable than when hauling ashes through the city, and his provender much more palatable than that furnished by the municipal authorities. The Chinaman stood helplessly by, too terrified even to seek safety in the seclusion of his own laundry.

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Mr. Jones, the Worcester correspondent of the *Boston Daily Press*, was returning to his home from the telegraph office, where he had just filed his report of an exciting session of the Common Council. The junior Councilman from the Ninth Ward had emphasized his dissent from a ruling of the chair by throwing an ink bottle at the presiding officer, and before

the ink stains were dry, interesting things enough had happened to make a despatch of 800 words.

Patrolman Blucher had finished his nap in the entry-way leading to Eckstein's cigar factory, and was strolling down the street to where he usually made his next resting-place, when he met Mr. Jones.

"Anything stirring to-night, Blucher?" asked Jones.

"No, all's quiet, I believe," replied the officer. "Of course you've got that fight over near the Union Depot?"

"Yes, I got it at the Police Station," said Jones. "Good-morning!" and he continued on his way.

"Good-morning!" returned the officer; and then he exclaimed: "Oh, by the way! There was a runaway down the street there just before you came along, but I don't suppose it amounted to anything. The horse turned into Perry Street, the driver after him. It's on McCorry's beat."

"It is n't much out of my way," said Jones; "I think I'll look round there. Good-morning!"

"Good-morning!" said the officer.

The scene of the disaster was soon reached. The driver had pressed the Chinaman into service, the cart had been righted and almost extricated, the horse reluctantly retreating with it in obedience to sharp commands.

It was 1.35 A.M.

Mr. Jones did not volunteer to assist in the work, for if a paragraph about the event were to appear in the Worcester edition of the *Press* there was no time to be lost. Two or three questions to the driver and a hasty inspection of the premises under the glare of an electric light, furnished him the needed facts, and he started on his return to the telegraph office. As he did so he left the driver and the Chinaman engaged in a controversy as to the responsibility for the accident, and whether the Chinaman should not be turned over to the police as guilty of malicious mischief or disturbance of the peace.

.

A sharp walk soon brought the correspondent to the telegraph office. He quickly had his despatch half written, and handed the sheet to the operator, who soon secured the attention of Boston, and then the wire pulsed with the electric current while a medley of dots and dashes reported a brief story of the accident. Before the operator finished the first sheet the rest of the despatch was handed him, and Mr. Jones started again for his home.

It was 1.58 when the Worcester operator received the first sheet of the despatch. At 2.8 he had sent the signature. It was 2.8 accordingly when the Boston operator finished the despatch, marked it with the number of words to be charged against the *Press* in its monthly

bill for telegraph tolls, and handed it to a boy in waiting who carried it to the clerk. The clerk ran the despatch through a copying-press resembling a clothes-wringer, entered it upon his book and sent it by pneumatic tube to the office on the ground-floor. Here another clerk received it, enclosed it in an envelope of the familiar type, stamped the envelope with the name of the *Press*, and handed it to a messenger boy. It was now 2.12 A.M.

Messenger No. 67 reached the *Press* office at 2.28 A.M. The despatch was handed to a boy in waiting upon the street floor, by him put into a leather cylinder like a dice-box, the cylinder inserted into the end of a brass tube, the end of the tube closed by a hinged cap, and a lever pressed. There was a hissing sound for two or three seconds, a ring upon an electric bell, and it was as good as a written receipt for the despatch from the night editor himself up on the fifth floor.

.

"Here's a scrap of Worcester," said the night editor, taking the despatch from the office boy on duty at the upper end of the pneumatic tube. "It's rather late for the edition, but you may jump it up, if you will, Mr. Slawson. Two twenty-eight!" he added, looking at the clock. "It's time the first page was going."

Mr. Slawson took the despatch and read it,

"editing" it as he read. He struck out the formal matter in the heading of the telegraph blank ; marked the date-line to run in at the beginning of the paragraph ; struck out superfluous or unimportant words or sentences ; indicated what abbreviated words should be spelled out by the compositor ; corrected errors ; supplied deficiencies ; and made the copy conform in all respects to the rules of the office.

"It is n't worth while to advertise old Chin Music's laundry," he said to himself, as he crossed out the first two lines of the despatch. "Early *this* morning," and he crossed out some twenty words more, "a horse attached to a city *ash* cart,"—making one short word do the work of three or four longer ones,—"took fright at a Chinaman, and ran down Main Street into Perry Street," and he made the usual "ring period" to avoid the possibility of mistake on the part of the compositor.

The night editor's assistant continued his work, performing it much more rapidly than it can be described.

In the next sentence he came upon the name "J. B. Krth." He was familiar with Polish and Russian names of surprising combinations of consonants, but a name with no vowel at all in it he assumed must be incorrect ; albeit, it was vouched for by the operator's little cross underneath. This cross indicated that the receiving operator had doubted the accuracy of the word

Form no. 22.

Collect Note press
The Western Union Telegraph Company.

Letter _____

No. 123 W

Sheet 1

Dated Worcester Mass.

Rec'd at 2.8 a.m.

To Press

Feb 10 189

Boston

As a Chinaman named Lim Sing who keeps a laundry at 422 Harrington Ave. was walking on Main at early morning his hat blew off. He set out in Pursuit of the hat and as he did so ran in front of a horse attached to a city cart engaged in collecting ashes. The horse took fright at the Chinaman and ran down Main St into Perry St. at the corner of Perry and Spruce St. the horse broke through plate glass window of J. B. Koth's bakery and confectionery shop when overtaken by driver he had eaten six doz biscuits and five pounds of chocolate caramels and the Pie counter had been buried under eight barrels of ashes. the horse is threatened with dyspepsia but otherwise uninjured

Jones

131 wds

Jones

Damaged Pies at a Bakery. (14)

Det. Worcester, Mass.

To Chief

Rec'd at 2:28 a.m.

Feb. 10, 189

Post

~~As a man named Lin Ling who keeps a laundry~~
~~at 121 Harrison Ave. was working on Main St. Early~~
~~this morning, he lost his off the set and in front of~~
~~the hat and as he did so ran in front of a horse attached~~
~~to a city ^{ash} cart engaged in collecting ashes. The horse took~~
~~fright at the Chinaman and ran down Main St. into~~
~~Perry St. at the corner of Perry and Spruce St. the~~
~~horse broke through the plate-glass window of J. B.~~
~~Keith's bakery and confectionery shop. When~~
~~overtaken by the driver he had eaten six ^{doz}~~
~~chiclets and five pounds of chocolate caramels,~~
~~and the pie counter had been buried under~~
~~eight barrels of ashes. The horse is~~
~~threatened with dyspepsia, but otherwise~~
~~was uninjured.~~

4 Jones

131 ~~Worcester~~

as received, and had queried the sending operator regarding it, and that it was reported to be in accordance with the despatch as written. An operator will entertain no appeal from his decision when once he has certified it by his cross.

"Perhaps it's Orth," Slawson at first thought, but a slight familiarity with the telegraphic alphabet taught him that "K" and "O" are represented by an entirely different combination of dots and dashes. "It must be Keith," he finally concluded, and made the correction accordingly. His decision was based on the similarity between "r" and "ei" in the Morse alphabet, it being only a question of the length of the pause between the dots in the case of - - -, which means "r," and - - -, which means "ei."

Mr. Slawson continued to the end of the despatch, marked the number to indicate to the compositor the size of the rule which was to follow the paragraph, and then wrote the headline. The correspondent had added a facetious sentence at the end of his despatch, and the news editor in the same spirit wrote a whimsical headline. He marked the head "14," that being the number by which that particular style of type is known in the office. Above the headline he wrote the correspondent's name, so that the managing editor should know who was responsible for the despatch in case it should prove to

be grossly inaccurate, and to show also who was entitled to compensation when it became a question of paying the correspondents for their services at the end of the month.

.

It was 2.28 when Mr. Slawson received the despatch, and at 2.32 it was making another rapid flight through a pneumatic tube, this time into the "copy room" of the composing department.

The "copy cutter" cut the despatch into two parts, so that two compositors might be working upon it at the same time. He marked the separate parts with a letter, to indicate the "galley," and with a number, to indicate the position in the galley, where each compositor should place his matter when it was in type, and then laid them upon "the board," a sort of counter where the compositors came to be supplied with copy.

The first "take" fell to the lot of "Slug 81," as the eighty-first compositor on the office list is known. The next man to finish his previous "take" and come for more copy was "Slug 14." "Slug 14" received his "take" of copy at 2.35 A.M.

At 2.44 both compositors had finished their work upon the Worcester despatch.

A proof-boy took the "galley," or long brass frame designed to hold a column or less of

type-matter, and "proved" it upon a proof press. The galley contained several other news despatches besides the one whose fortunes we are following.

The proof and the copy were now again placed in a leather cylinder and sent by pneumatic pressure up into one of the proof-readers' rooms. The proof-reader read aloud the contents of the

EIGHTY-ONE

Jones

Damaged Pies at a Bargain.

WORCESTER, Mass., Feb. 10.—Early this morning a horse attached to a city ash cart took fright at a Chinaman and ran down Main street into Perry street. At the corner of Perry and ~~and~~ Spruce streets the horse broke through the plate-glass

FOURTEEN

window of J. B. Keith's bakery and confectioner's shop. When overtaken by the driver he had eaten six dozen biscuits and five pounds of chocolate caramels, and the pie counter had been buried under eight barrels of ashes. The horse is threatened with dyspepsia, but otherwise was uninjured.

galley, the "copy-holder" following him with the original manuscript to insure accuracy. Correcting with a pencil as he read, the proof-reader soon marked the errors left by the compositors, and the proof was returned to the composing-room.

The "slug" numbers show not only who are entitled to pay for setting the type, but also who

are expected to make the needed changes and corrections. "Slug 81" corrected his own mistakes, and then, as "Slug 14" had made only one error, "Slug 81" was also required, under the rules of the office, to continue correcting. As soon, however, as he came to a "take" in which two or more errors had been made, the compositor at fault would be required to take up the task.

With the correction of the proof the "slugs" of the compositors and the lines giving credit to the correspondents and reporters were removed, and the matter was ready to be locked up in the form.

It was now just 3 o'clock. The eighth page was nearly full, the remaining pages having already gone to the stereotype room. The galley of type was placed upon a small but strongly built table, beside a similar table having a heavy cast-iron top. Both tables were mounted on large casters, so as to move freely over the iron floor of the room. Upon the table with the iron top lay the matter which should appear upon the eighth page of the morning paper. Little space remained unfilled, and when our Worcester despatch, and two or three other pieces of country news had been placed in the form, the page was full. There was some lively hammering for half a minute, by a man in his shirt sleeves, while with mallet and wooden block he "planed" the form, bringing

all the type to the same level, and then another man, by a few turns of a wrench, "locked" it up, and the table was trundled off to the stereotype room. The composing-room clock showed four minutes past three.

Another little table was in waiting, and the form was pushed from one to the other; by the turn of a crank the top of the second table was lowered to the level of the "matrix-rolling" machine, and the form was transferred to the bed of the machine. The matrix paper, resembling a sheet of wet blotting paper, was laid on the form, a thick blanket over it, and the form was carried by steam power under a heavy iron cylinder. By this means the matrix paper received an exact impression in reverse of every letter and every line in the page. Hardly a minute had elapsed since the form reached the stereotype room, and it was now ready for the drying press.

This apparatus resembles an ordinary office copying-press, but is larger and much heavier. The bed of the press is heated by steam pipes, and there, under pressure, the matrix is dried upon the form of type.

Less than three minutes suffice for this process. The matrix, now resembling embossed cardboard, was trimmed, powdered chalk was dusted over it, and it was placed in the curved casting mould. The mould being closed it was placed nearly upright, and two scantily clad

men dipped from the melting furnace a heavy ladle of type-metal, and filled the mould. In a minute the stereotype-plate was hardened sufficiently to be removed, and then in quick succession followed the trimming and finishing, and the final process of shaving out by steam power the inside of the plate so that it should be of uniform thickness and fit exactly the cylinder of the press. Seven minutes have elapsed since the form left the composing-room, and the stereotype-plate now starts on its journey to the press-room in the basement.

.

The hour is 3.11 A.M.

In the press-room an ominous silence prevails. The presses are waiting only for the eighth page, the other pages being already in position. In rapid succession duplicate plates of the eighth page are received, placed on the cylinders of the several presses, and clamped in position, and then one by one the presses start. As they consume the great rolls of white paper, and turn out rapidly an endless succession of papers, folded and counted, the din becomes deafening. It happens to be a twelve-page paper this morning. At one end of the press eight pages are printed, and at the other end, fed from an independent roll of paper, the remaining four pages. Both parts are folded together by the same machine, and delivered in a steady stream, to be carried

away in huge bunches to the elevator leading to the mailing and delivery room.

Here, although the manufactured product is finished, the hurry does not cease. Mailing clerks hustle copies of the *Press* into their brown-paper jackets, which have already been addressed, the rules of the postal service requiring that the newspaper mail shall be sorted and locked up in the sacks at the post-office by 4 o'clock. A force of men also receive, count, and bundle up the papers for news-dealers far and near, and the bundles are loaded upon wagons, to be delivered at the various railway stations.

The *Press* has many thousand papers to deliver to country dealers and subscribers, and the printing machines are kept busy for some time to supply the demand. Later new stereotype plates for two, or three, or four of the pages, as the case may be, will be received in the press-room, and the presses will noisily manufacture the city edition. This in turn will be bundled up in the delivery room and sent to dealers at hotels and railway stations, and at news-stands of high and low degree, throughout the city and suburbs. A little later still a swarm of news-boys will begin to arrive, soon to be clamoring at the counter of the delivery room for their papers, the number of papers in each case being determined by the tickets which they present to the delivery clerks, and which they have pur-

chased at a sort of "box office" near by. In this manner is handled the "circulation" of the *Press*.

.

It is half-past six on this tenth morning of February, when the first train from Boston arrives in Worcester. The hour is early enough for even the earliest risers among newspaper readers, and there is no need of the special newspaper trains which deliver the Sunday papers within a radius of a hundred miles or more of Boston.

At the Union Station a group of news-agents, some proprietors of imposing news-stands, and some boys in tattered clothes are in waiting, and promptly storm the baggage car to secure their invoices of papers. The local-delivery system once in motion the purveyors of the news quickly disappear in their several directions, and it is a matter of minutes merely when, at private houses in all parts of the city, morning papers are being left, to be served with the rolls and coffee at the breakfast-table.

Mr. J. B. Keith, baker, is at his home, suffering with influenza. His assistants, on learning at an early hour of the disaster at the corner of Perry and Spruce Streets, have repaired damages as best they could and refrained from disturbing the slumber of their invalid employer.

Mr. Keith is improving, and soon after 7 this morning he rises, takes his quinine, and while waiting for breakfast to be brought to him in his chamber he glances at the news in the morning paper. He is a reader of the *Boston Press*. Stirring head-lines telling of wars and rumors of wars, crimes, casualties and political combinations, grain harvests in Australia and death's harvest nearer home, city government quarrels

Damaged Pies at a Bargain.

WORCESTER, Mass., Feb. 10.—Early this morning a horse attached to a city ash cart took fright at a Chinaman and ran down Main street into Perry street. At the corner of Perry and Spruce streets the horse broke through the plate-glass window of J. B. Keith's bakery and confectioner's shop. When overtaken by the driver he had eaten six dozen biscuits and five pounds of chocolate caramels, and the pie counter had been buried under eight barrels of ashes. The horse is threatened with dyspepsia, but otherwise was uninjured.

and legislative debates, the theatres and sporting matters—all have little of interest for an invalid reader.

He is about to lay the paper aside when an obscure head-line, "Damaged Pies at a Bargain," catches his attention. It is in the line of his own trade, and he reads the despatch. Good heavens! Worcester; Perry and Spruce Streets; J. B. Keith! What things have been happening while he has been asleep!

What things indeed ! The aid of hundreds of men, has been invoked to inform Mr. Keith of the accident at his own bakery ; the aid of thousands, to present to him the news of the whole world, and for the price, merely, of one of his own muffins !



THE LITERARY EDITOR



THE LITERARY EDITOR.

BY MELVILLE PHILIPS.

THERE needs at the outset of my paper some definition of its title. The book-reviewer on the staff of a daily newspaper is commonly known as its literary editor, though, as a matter of fact, he is seldom a literary person. Moreover, his duties are determined by the character of the organ he serves: it seems to be worth the while of comparatively few journals in the United States to employ a competent critic solely for the purpose of telling its readers about the contents of new books. In most cases this function is performed perfunctorily by the musical or dramatic editor, who, in turn, is simply an industrious, enthusiastic, or overworked member of the writing force,—perhaps a writer of “editorials,” perhaps not. At all events, it is folly to designate him as a literary editor or as a book reviewer; he edits nothing, he reviews nothing; he is first and last a drudge, capable, perhaps, of something better than hack-work, but productive of that alone. Then there are

first-class journals which send out some of the more important books for review to special writers, and dispose of the great body of new publications in brief paragraphs,—vastly to the disgust of the publishers and authors. Or the various members of the staff are periodically taxed for lengthy notices of the larger works, and the remainder is comprehensively condemned in a sporadic half column or so of “literary notes” by the exchange editor. Finally, there is the small group of journals which have found it to their interest or profit to make a “feature” of adequate book-reviews, edited and for the most part written by a single responsible “literary editor.” He may, to be sure, do other things,—pass upon contributed verse or manuscript of a general literary character, select the miscellany from magazines, help in the make-up of the Sunday supplement, write the obituaries of distinguished authors, and contribute a fixed or irregular quantity of “editorials” during the week; but these odds and ends of duties are quite by the way; he is first and foremost a reviewer of new books.

The life of such a one, if he would have it so, is the most tranquil in journalism. He will do a large part, and it will be the better part, of his work at home. At the office, only the occasional visit of a passionate poet, manuscript in hand, or of a nervous author eager to indicate the particular merits of his printed work, will

disturb the reviewer's communion with current literature. His professional adventures are of the mildest sort.

I recall an autumn afternoon when a woman of middle age, shabbily dressed, with a bit of black lace crossed over her head, and a thick coat on, worn threadbare, tiptoed to the centre of my room and coughed softly. I looked up, and she beamed upon me with the drollest affectation of suppressed excitement and glee. Her eyes bulged humidly, and her skin was of a salmon tint. She wore "mits." I dare say the not unreasonable rigidity of my countenance under her kindling glances disconcerted her, for suddenly she ran or waddled to the door and beckoned wildly without. "It's all right, Tom, she called; "he's here"; and in slouched her male counterpart, a most disreputable-looking figure, with matted red hair, bristling cheeks and chin, and a faded corn-colored suit, puffed at the knees. He, also, standing in the background and making a brave show at the adjustment of his impossible cuffs, was radiant with smiles.

"Now, Tom," said she, tripping forward again with an admonitory wave of her hand, "let's make him guess." Then, confronting me with arms akimbo and a fat smile of expectancy, she demanded, "Who *am* I?"

"Tom" was making an awkward attempt to play the part of an amused spectator,—of a

friend in common complacently abiding the surprise of a sudden revelation,—and from time to time he looked knowingly at me and chuckled, and then the Princess in Disguise would chuckle too, and wag her head, and lift her forefinger warningly to her painted lips.

It was utterly preposterous, to be sure, but the day had been dull, and I welcomed the episode. Looking intently at the Princess, I ventured, in answer to her question,—

“Mrs. Oliphant.”

Her delight overflowed in a shrill laugh. “No, no, no,” she cried. “Guess again.—Now, Tom,” menacing him with a mittened hand, “don’t tell.”

“Amélie Rives.”

That threw her into transports ; she signed to Tom to behold my dumb agony of doubt, and then, quite scarlet with the suppression of her mirth, besought me to guess again. I went on guessing wildly,—Mrs. Burnett, Frances Power Cobbe, Gail Hamilton, Harriet Prescott Spoford, and a dozen others; and each name was hailed with the same show of suppressed joy, and the same admonition to Tom,—“Don’t tell !” Then, of a sudden, and in such an impressive manner as Roderick Dhu announced himself to the Saxon, she drew her feet together and with outstretched mits exclaimed,—

“I am Cora Muggins !” (That, as it will be readily supposed, is not the name the Princess

gave, but so far as the reading public is concerned it might as well be.) First I glanced at Tom, and there was on his face such an expression of gratified pride as mothers wear when their tots speak pieces from church platforms. He caught my eye and nodded slowly in affirmation of Cora's statement, as though he would say, "Wildly improbable as her claim may seem to you, she speaks the truth." There was but one thing to do, and I did it.

"Can it be possible," I said, seizing her hands, "that this is Cora Muggins? I never expected to see you,"—which was truth itself. "And this," I added, turning to Tom, "is doubtless Mr. Muggins?" It was ; and a very good-natured and broadly-grinning Muggins at that.

Then, with much simpering, and incessant tugging at the bit of black lace, and many appeals to Tom, Mrs. Cora got under way. It was very nice of me to have said what I did about *Dandelions and Dew-Drops*; she had liked my few words better than any that had been said about the book,—had cut them out, indeed, and kept them in her purse : see ?

I took the little slip of paper and read with a pang some such jocose and equivocal phrase as that "only time and space prevented our saying the adequate word for the remarkable verses collectively entitled *Dandelions and Dew-Drops*."

And Tom would be witness that my "review" (!) had encouraged her to the writing of another

volume. Of course I had heard that old Mr. Muggins was dead?—"Dead!" said I; "old Mr. Muggins dead?"—Yes, and he had left Tom eight hundred dollars, and they both agreed that the best, the *surest* way to invest it would be in the publication of *Lambs and Lillies*, the new volume of verse; and didn't I think so too! and would n't I look over the manuscript and be brutally frank?—"She won't mind it a bit from you," murmured Mr. Muggins, with uplifted eyebrows.

But that is enough of the Mugginses and the likes of them. They are funny for once,—just once.

The visits of poets are not like those of angels: I have entertained a dozen in one day. If this experience were peculiar to the life of the literary editor of a daily newspaper, I would dwell upon it, and print some of the extraordinary verses that have come my way; but other editors and editors of other journals see even more of this particular phase of the business, and have frequently described the humors of it. I will not concede to them, however, many funnier memories than that, so precious to me, of the astigmatic Irishman from Chicago, wearing two pairs of spectacles and a wondrously freckled skin, who dumped upon my desk a roll of manuscript as thick, upon my word, as a stove-pipe, with the hoarse announcement, "Oi'm Gaffy that wrut *The Banshay o' Belfast*, 'n' that 's me

appic that yuv read of. Will yez tek it?" The title of the epic was "Cora," and Mr. Gaffy assured me that it contained one hundred thousand lines, and I have no reason to question his figures. Mr. Gaffy also informed me, with swelling chest, that before he had reached the age of sixteen years he had written twice as much as Byron wrote in all his life, and "Wud yez b'lave it, there's not a shillin' to show fur it!" It was with great difficulty that I led Mr. Gaffy to see the impossibility of printing his poem in the Sunday issues of *The Press*: at the rate of a column a week six years would be consumed in its publication; and when, at length, he realized this he went away fully appreciating, I think, my self-denial in commending him and his interesting bundle to the editor of Lippincott's.

The poor author we have always with us; in all seasons he is at our door soliciting the privilege (with pay) to print. And, after all, he is a likelier person than the rich dilettante: I mean the man of egregious self-esteem, who, having achieved success in his chosen field of employment, the practice of law or the printing of calicoes, feels suddenly called upon, though destitute of literary taste and training, to demonstrate his fitness for the profession of letters. It matters nothing that he fails utterly, from the view-point of the publishers and the public, to make good this demonstration, or that his book is brought out at his own expense, and bought up

by the same interested party for free distribution among obliging friends. He has written a book, and he would have the literary editors know it.

Came to me one day an author of this sort,—a sleek and orotund man, of memorable appearance, authoritative and even domineering in manner, eloquent but oracular in speech. He laid with gloved hand the daintily-dressed child of his genius upon my table, disclosed his identity with the air of one bestowing a priceless gift, and then began to address me upon the manifold evils of my calling. . . . It was an age and a day, as I doubtless knew, when the book-stalls were heavily laden with trash. Publishers raked in the erotic rot written by silly school-girls and pitchforked into the street the serious productions of scholars and thinkers. . . . Knowing this, he had not condescended to treat with them; he had, sir, printed at his own expense the volume before me,—a work representing years of study and reflection, a work not to be dismissed by hack-writers in a perfunctory paragraph. That *must* not be. He knew too well the truth of Gay's dictum, "No author ever spar'd a brother"; he knew very well why *Sartor Resartus* had at first fallen flat on the public. Carlyle had not been shrewd enough to interview the reviewers,—to prepare them for the reading of the book, and through them to educate the public to a sense of its

value. . . . That mistake should not be his ; he felt it would be an intolerable wrong if, through neglecting to take the proper and customary precautions, his work should fail of success in the very face of the deplorable popularity of books like *Robert Elsmere* and *The Quick or the Dead*? Therefore he had come in person with his *Shakespeare Shorn of Verbiage*, and he would tell me in a word what he cared to have said about it. . . . And now, sir, I've detained you long enough ; I'm rushed for time, and I suppose you're busy too. Just another word : I have n't really the leisure to look after the book ; the notices must be got ; and I'd like you to get them. No, no, no ! Don't say a word—I understand, *perfectly*. Time *is* money. . . . Be good enough to name the amount, and I'll send you my cheque for it this afternoon.

Every word of which—saving the title of the *magnum opus*, which I have measurably softened down—is quite true ; and equally true it is that, recovering my breath and urbanity, I was able to tell the distinguished author certain things which, I sincerely hope, improved his understanding better than they did his temper. Of course he was aware that he had offered to bribe me ? I asked. He was not ? Ah, well, but he had ; and, moreover, he might bear in mind that he was the first who had tried to do it. That was a novel method of pushing a book, but

I distrusted its efficiency. Then it occurred to me,—had he not confounded the reviewer with the advertising manager? No? Well, the place to spend money was down in the business office. An indifferent book might be favorably though foolishly noticed by a conscientious reviewer for friendship's sake; but for the sake of a *douceur*!—why, the dishonor of the act—Tut, tut, tut, said the author of *Shakespeare Shorn*.—Yes, yes, said I, and there's dishonor to the man who attempts the bribery and corruption. I had him at the door by this time, and there I told him suavely that it was not necessary to grease the ways for the launching of a good book, and that greasing the ways would n't prevent the sinking of a bad one. As for *Shakespeare Shorn*, we would take pleasure in knocking the props from under it. And we did.

These are typical memories. There is little of interest in them, to be sure; but, as we said in the beginning, the office life of the literary editor is likely to be the most tranquil one in journalism. That is its charm; for when adventures do come one has appetite for them. Vastly did I relish, for instance, a trifling event which disturbed the routine of my work late one December afternoon several years ago.

I was writing notices of some belated holiday books in my den on the top floor of a building, when a fluttering rap on the half-open door drew my attention to a large-eyed child about eight

years old, who was n't pretty, and who had n't golden hair, but who stood there in a shabby, clean calico frock, cool as a cucumber.

"No, thank you," said I, briskly. "No matches to-day."

"Matches!" said she, with exquisite scorn; "I ain't got any matches. Where's the *red-eater*?"

I told her that the red-eater-in-chief had gone home, but that a choice assortment of auxiliaries were at hand, and which one would she have? "The one that buys the stories," said she; and I begged her to be seated until I finished the work before me. When presently I looked up she was lolling over the table in mute rapture over the highly-colored pictures in a Christmas story-book.

"Now," said I, with a difficult assumption of dignity, "what is your business with the red-eater?"

She ignored me completely, closed the gorgeous volume with a sigh, and asked, in a whisper, "Is he awful cross?"

"Cross?" said I; "well, you wait till you meet him."

She was not in the least cast down by this; but I fancied she was pitying me immensely. "I would n't work for him if I was you," she said, plainly taking me for the fiery red-eater's office-boy. "Does he like you?"

"A little."

"Would he buy a story from you?"

"Perhaps."

"Well, now," confidently, "see here, I'll tell you what: you get him to buy this story I've wrote, an' when he pays you we'll divide. I ain't told pap or ennybody 'bout writin' it, but it's awful good,—the first I've wrote. Will you do it?"

"I'll try." Then half reluctantly she handed me the precious dirty roll of note-paper and fled noiselessly down stairs.

It was a wonderful bit of fiction,—shreds and patches of Sunday-school stories pieced together by the childish imagination into a dolorous tale of a shipwrecked parent returning to his impoverished family on Christmas Eve, in the character of Santa Claus. The whole melancholy narrative, a column in length, was told in two expansive sentences, of marvellous punctuation and delightful orthography. But it moved me strangely; and I sat right there at my desk and wrote an introduction to it, and then sent it into the composing-room marked "Follow copy." So it appeared as our Christmas story, gayly illustrated, with the name of the author conspicuously flaunted in the head-line; and the managing editor agreed with me that it was dirt-cheap at ten dollars.

On the day before Christmas the large-eyed child stole again into my den and touched me on the elbow.

"Well?" she asked, to all appearances still as cool as a cucumber. "What'd he say?"

"Why," said I, "he wants to know how much you ask for your novel."

She was "stumped": she wagged her little head and stared hard at me, with an incipient cupidity peeping plainly from her eyes.

"Is he mean?" she demanded.

The red-eater, I assured her, was not a stingy man.

"Well, then," with a frightened look, "fifty cents: that's twenty-five for you," she added apologetically, "and twenty-five for me."

I placed the ten-dollar note in her hand and picked up my pen. "That's yours," said I, "if you promise me not to do it again."

For a minute she was speechless; then, "What's this for?" she asked.

"Your Christmas story."

"Who give it to me?"

"I did."

"Who are you?"

"The red-eater."

"You!!"

There was more than disappointment in her tone; there was distinctly doubt and scorn in it. Then she went sideways out of the room, no longer as cool as a cucumber, but eying me suspiciously. As a matter of fact, I felt hurt.

THE TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT



THE TRAVELLING CORRESPONDENT.

BY W. J. C. MEIGHAN.

THE way of the travelling newspaper correspondent, like the way of the transgressor, is hard ; but there are times when it is made by its results very agreeable, even when danger to life and limb besets him at every step. If there is one thing more than another that infuses spirit and enthusiasm into the correspondent, it is his determination to succeed in accomplishing what he is instructed to accomplish. Above all things, if he learns that he is on the same special mission as some go-ahead rival, he has but one grand object in view from the moment he leaves the office with his grip-sack. That object is, to "beat" the life out of the other fellow, cost what it may, legitimately, no matter what the trials and tribulations he himself may have to encounter.

Now, there are newspaper correspondents who sometimes fail, although they may be in every respect as good writers, as brave when confronted by danger, as resolute to accomplish

their work successfully, as other newspaper correspondents who invariably succeed. The reason for this is a very simple one. The newspaper proprietor is to blame for the failures in nine cases out of ten, not the correspondents. It is because he does n't back up his representative the way he should. The proprietor who starts him out with economy ringing in his ears, and flatly tells him that he must keep within a certain financial limit in spite of everything, ought not to be surprised when his paper is "beaten." Fancy an able correspondent finding himself at the very threshold of a successful investigation, for instance, of a crime committed miles away from railroads and telegraphs, obliged to come to a halt because he has n't money enough left to hire a horse and no authority to get a dollar anywhere. Meanwhile, a rival correspondent is speeding on his way behind the fastest team the nearest village can supply. I have seen many a bright man outpaced in this way and black-marked when he returned crestfallen to his office, while the newspaper proprietor was the sole cause of his miserable failure.

The proprietor of the paper I was connected with, when I was on the missions I will go into detail about to show what were a few of the "toughest" assignments I ever got, is not a newspaper proprietor of this kind, by long odds. I refer to James Gordon Bennett. No *Herald* correspondent, honest and true in his purpose

to have the best account about anything he is specially detailed to write, has ever found himself "cornered" because of lack of funds when he happened to be far beyond every line of communication with his office. He is, on the contrary, always armed to the teeth with credit, a signed and sealed note-of-hand, which, magnet like, will draw the needful cash from any spot on earth. Some of us have heard what Mr. Bennett's famous father is said to have done when a *Herald* correspondent "doing" the Prince of Wales' travels in Canada many years ago laid a Bible down before the telegraph operator, and, pointing to the first page, said, "Begin there." It was by this ruse that the correspondent held the wire while his rivals had to wait long after midnight till he had his "copy" ready as a legitimate modern continuation of the book of Genesis. It is said that six hundred dollars' worth of Genesis reached the *Herald* office before that "copy" was ready. "Telegraph the whole Bible, if necessary," was the flashing order that came over the wires from Bennett, Sr., when the correspondent had made the situation plain to him. Yet I doubt if that circulation of the Bible by telegraph would have ever had a beginning, but for the full-sweep letter of credit that was laid before the operator alongside the good book. The present Mr. Bennett would have done the same thing under the same circumstances, as I know from experi-

ence of his liberality and his pluck, two qualities, after all, which a newspaper proprietor nowadays must have, else the ablest correspondent on his staff is likely to go under some day through no fault of his own.

But now as to some of my "tough" assignments, and how they came about. Take the great Chicago fire as the first, although not the strongest, illustration. I was in New York when the news came of the calamity. The regular resident correspondents there had sent good specials concerning the events of the first day, and I received orders in writing on the second day, "Go to Chicago by first train to-day; wire us simply the word 'Here' when you arrive there. Spare no expense, go anywhere and by any mode of travel, to get all the news. Picture graphically what you see, so that *Herald* readers will have, as they read, the burning city before their eyes. At the same time, bear in mind that while graphic picturing of scenes makes attractive reading, what the people all over the world want to know are *facts*, FACTS, FACTS."

The train I left New York on was crowded with Chicago merchants or their New York agents, and I became through them pretty well acquainted, before I got there, with Chicago streets and the site of the fire. The soft side of a floor in a real-estate man's office was my Chicago bed the first night I spent there, my valise was my pillow, and my landlord was one of the

travellers I had met on the train from New York. Things went along pretty well, until I found that the telegraph offices would not let any newspaper specials interfere with the messages being sent by thousands in distress to friends in the East, asking for succor. What was to be done? I managed to get a few despatches on the wires, the right of way being given to the Associated Press, but they were meagre. I hit it. Twice a day I sent a messenger to Cleveland, Ohio, and there my "stuff" was put on the wires. Every word I sent *via* Cleveland I handed in on clean duplicate copy to the besieged Chicago office, so as to test my far-away plan of sending the despatches. But a few words of the specials would have reached the *Herald* direct from the Chicago office, on the first two days after my arrival, in time to get into the paper the day after they were sent. After that, things went smoothly. To accomplish the work, I had a horse at my door every day and night, and two men with horses ready at a moment's call to rush to the depots with copy, and to scour about with me for the latest news of importance relating to the fire-fiend's devastation. Hiring a special engine, too, with a "copy" messenger to Cleveland, was a costly undertaking. Many a time at night while groping my way along streets lighted on both sides by the smouldering fires, I heard the click of a gun and "Who goes there?" from a sentinel. Thanks to General Sheridan, who gave me a

pass, my copy and myself were let go our ways uninjured. It was when he gave me that pass that I saw Sheridan for the last time. "Do you smoke?" he asked me, in a gruff way, as he signed it. "You do, eh? Well, don't light your cigar when your 're prowling around at night in this neighborhood. Something painful may suddenly put your light out." I never smoked at night after that till I got to New York. Had I done otherwise, I might have met the same fate one of the city officials did who walked into a side alley to light a cigar one night. He was shot dead by one of the watchers.

When Tilden was at the height of his fight against the Tweed ring, everybody in the State of New York, in September, 1871, had his eyes on the election of delegates to the State Convention which was to be held in Rochester. About two weeks before the date fixed for the Convention, which was to be held in the first week of October, I was given a list of leading Democrats who resided in different parts of the State. "Get the views of every one of these men as to what action the Convention should take regarding Tweed," were my instructions. It was late at night when I was handed the order. I saw at a glance that many of the men lived far apart and far beyond the "beaten roads of travel." The prospect of covering in two weeks the total distance in search of them,

to say nothing, if I found them, of having time to write out in full the views that would be required from each man, appalled me. In fact, failure must have stamped itself on my countenance as I looked over the list, for Mr. Bennett quietly remarked, "I had better send somebody else: I see you cannot cover the ground in time." I felt the blood rush to my face. As my teeth clinched I tried to suppress my feelings in saying, "If *I* cannot do this, no one else can." Mr. Bennett laughed, and said, in his quick way, "Well, go: those interviews must be published before the Convention meets. If the men say what I think they will say, Tweed and his followers will be driven out of the Convention, and the *Herald* will have put a heavy nail in the coffin of the Tammany ring."

Go I did; I did n't even go home for a grip-sack; and half an hour later I was whirling on my way on the Central Railroad. It so happened that it rained nearly every day after I had started, and, as much of my travelling had to be done on horseback, or in ramshackle wagons over rough country roads, in order to make time between out-of-the-way places where teams were not seen frequently, I had little rest. From the time I left New York till I reached Albany on my return I did not take off my clothes once. Indeed, I did not go to bed at all. A dash of cold water in my face and a hasty rub of a brush over my head was my daily

and nightly toilet. An hour or two on a sofa, stretched weary, worn, and generally wet from head to foot, afforded me a little doze. It was *travel*, TRAVEL, TRAVEL, then *write*, WRITE, WRITE, and after writing till the "wee hours of morn" in a dingy country inn, and at times in a fine city hotel, my only exercise, off a horse's back, a buggy's stretch-board, or a seat in a car, was the dash I made for the main post-office to catch the earliest mail. Very often I had to bunch my points of search in my interview campaign so as to capture two or three men on the same day who were miles apart. When this bunch became four or five I had to call a halt at some inn or hotel, and, instead of resting, go to work with the knowledge that I was not only three or four columns behind, but had many miles yet to cover, and many men yet to find.

But all's well that ends well. Three days before the Convention met I had accomplished my work ; but, strange as it may seem, from the time I left New York till then I had not seen a New York newspaper. I had had something else to do than read "home" papers ; and even when I reached Albany on my return to New York I was so fagged out that I did n't even go into the reading-room of the hotel. I took a bath, and for the first time in two weeks went to bed, not, however, until—seeing myself before the mirror pale as a ghost, haggard and hollow-eyed, my linen collar bedraggled and of the

color of dark-brown paper, and my coat of every color *not* in the rainbow—I had wondered how on earth the hotel proprietor ever let a room to such a tramp ! I “slept the sleep that knows no waking” for hours, and arose as fresh as a lark.

In clean linen and a brand-new suit of clothes, I felt like a new man when I went to “break-fast”—at dinner-time. Thus much up to this point for my work as a travelling correspondent on that trip ; but who knew what work I had done ? The thought immediately occurred to me to get a file of the *Herald* from the time I had left New York. I got one, and rummaged over it. As I rummaged I became nearly crazy, and as I finished the rummaging I really think I was crazy. There was not a line of any of my letters anywhere. What had become of them ? I had not, during my lightning trip, received a word from the *Herald* office. I rushed to the hotel office and examined the despatches on the counter. There was one for me. How eagerly I opened it ! but I thought I should faint when I read it. It said nothing about having received anything from me during my travels, but simply this : “When you reach Albany, return at once to Rochester and join hands with Ashley W. Cole and M. J. Kelly, whom you will find there.” I was heart-broken : on my way home to be thus shuffled back mercilessly galled me to the quick. But it was well

that—true *Herald* man like—I obeyed orders and took the first train for Rochester; for Tilden was on that train, and he gave me an insight into his great plan of battle to oust the Tammany contingent. Tweed and his followers arrived at Rochester the same night we did.

On the night before the Convention there was a grand hustle among the agents of both sides for the New York train that would have the New York papers of that day. I noticed that Tilden's men got huge piles of the *Herald*, and set to work marking the same column with a blue-pencil circle. I took up a copy. In the flash of an eye I was the happiest man in the United States. There, under a display heading that reached to within a quarter of a column of the bottom of a page, were fifteen solid columns of my letters. Talk of a man dreaming that he had lost all his family in a railroad collision and suddenly waking up to find his wife and little ones playing tag round the parlor table,—such a man's joy was something like mine. My work as a travelling correspondent without a night's full rest or undressing once in two weeks had not been a failure, and Uncle Sam's mails had not played me false.

Although many of the rural delegates had come without having made up their minds what to do with Tweed till they had heard what the party "big guns" all over the State had to say, they were not forgotten by Tilden the day the

Convention met. It was the interview with Horatio Seymour that his agents had been blue-pencil-circling the night before, and every delegate from city or country, when he went to his breakfast before the Convention met, found a blue-pencilled *Herald* beside him. Tweed and his delegates were not thrown out by the Convention, but in order not to be kicked out they presented a communication in which they "waived the right to participate in the proceedings," and made no attempt to be formally recognized. The following was one of the reasons given in the Ring's manifesto why its delegates "waived the right" to be seated: "We cannot ignore the fact that grave charges, involving the official integrity of certain prominent members of the Tammany Hall General Committee, have been made by the opposition press, calculated to prejudice the people of the State against said organization." Well, we all know what the "opposition press" did on the election day that followed that Convention, and how it managed to "prejudice the people of the State" against the Ring robbers. Mr. Bennett's prediction was practically fulfilled.

I could fill volumes showing what a travelling correspondent does *not* hesitate to do in obeying orders. In 1868 I was making a tour of some of the Southern States, especially with a view of getting at the bottom of the doings of the Ku-Klux, fairly and squarely, without bias. Some-

times I had to sleep in a negro's cabin on the road-side, in a lonely part of the country; at other times I fared well at city hotels. Had I known when I started from New York what I was expected to do, I think I would have shown the "white feather." I was, in starting, simply told to go to Nashville and attend a convention that was to be held there. When I arrived I found orders for me which said, "You will make a tour of these States, and avoid, when possible, the beaten roads of travel," and then the details were given as to what I should do. This meant an across-the-country cut, evidently. Well, I went to Nashville, expecting to return in three days. I never left the South for several months, thanks to that "avoid the beaten roads of travel" order. But I will give only one incident of this "tough" assignment, to show what a correspondent has to do to succeed sometimes, even at the risk of his life.

I managed to get Fort Pillow Forrest, the famous Confederate cavalry officer, to consent to talk to me fully about the Ku-Klux. I was in Nashville, and he was in Memphis. I had to meet him on a certain day, otherwise my great opportunity was gone. Besides, I knew that a Cincinnati newspaper-man was then on his way to Memphis for the same purpose. That knowledge of itself made me desperate. I left Nashville one evening, but during the journey, to my dismay, the train broke down. I found that

gosh!

the only way I could make up for lost time was to walk several miles; but I was warned that I should have to cross a rocky stream on the narrow side-planking of a huge trestle several hundred feet long and thirty or forty feet high. I did the walking well till I reached that trestle. It was a shaky affair, and I wonder how on earth a train in those days ever got over it safely, after the wear and tear it had got from war transportation work. Fortunately, the moon was shining and the sky was clear. I used my grip-sack as a balance medium at times, and was fully half-way over, when I heard a whistle blow and the low rumble of a train behind the cliffs ahead of me. It was a single track I was walking on, too. I don't know, but I think my hair stood on end like needles: anyhow, I felt as if somebody had suddenly pulled them up by the roots and then dropped a piece of ice down my back.

There was a slight curve at the end of the trestle, towards which I was making my way, and I could then see no train. But I saw it soon enough. The shimmering of the head-light through the trees away beyond the trestle grew brighter, and the rumble of the cars grew louder and louder. There was no time to be lost. The engineer could never see me until he struck the trestle, and then all the brakes in the world could n't stop the train from rushing over where I stood. Well, that train went completely

over me, yet I met Forrest the next day, dined with him, and had a three-column interview with him on the wires twenty-four hours afterwards, which interview, I am happy to say, Henry Watterson, the brilliant editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, copied in his paper with big head-lines when he saw it in the *Herald*.

Now let me say that, although that train went over me, the only damage it did was to make me drop the grip-sack in the stream on the rocks below. My only safety was not to follow the grip-sack ; and yet, if I did n't, would I not be crushed by the cars ? It was a question of policy that had to be settled as quick as lightning. Across the track, reaching from rail to rail, there were iron brace-rods about two feet apart, on almost a dead level with the lower part of the beams on which the rails rested. With both hands I grasped hold of one of these before the train reached me, and clung to it as if it was a trapeze, with my body swinging above the stream, but of course below the tracks. Richard was himself again when the cars had swept by, and, as I 've said, I was able to fulfil my Forrest mission.

I shall never forget, as long as I live, how one day I became a travelling correspondent much against my will at the start, and won a great victory finally, not only to outdo my rivals, but to " get even " with Uncle Sam for what I con-

sidered an outrage. My rivals this time were *Herald* men, for I was at the time on the *World*, when Dave Croly was managing editor and Manton Marble was the editor-in-chief. In fact, I was a neophyte in the business ; I had not been in the traces over ten months. Two United States gunboats, the *Algonquin* and the *Winooski*, had been for weeks tied to the dock at the Navy Yard, Brooklyn, and had been under steam all the time, and a perpetual test was being made of their engines, which were of different styles. It was determined one day to send the vessels on Long Island Sound and find out not only how the engines would work, but which vessel would travel the faster. In fact, it was to be a United States government race and no mistake.

I was detailed to go on one of the boats as a casual observer. I was at ease on the *Algonquin*, until, after passing through Hell Gate on our way out to the Sound, where the engine-test was to begin, I was suddenly but courteously invited by the commander to step down and out with the pilot, who would be happy to take me ashore free of cost. In a word, I had no permit from the Navy Department to go with the gunboat. Now, as I left behind me two *Herald* men, permit-equipped, who, over the sides of the rail, gigglingly bade me a tender *au revoir*, I felt madder than a March hare. It was at this point I was made a travelling correspondent,—from

the steamer to the shore,—much against my will at the start.

Did I go to the office to ask Dave Croly to denounce the United States government for infringing upon what my youthful mind regarded as “the rights of the press”? I felt very much like it; but I was so maddened by the sight of my rivals sailing away complacently on that little man-of-war that I did n’t. The two gunboats in their test of speed on their return to New York would, I knew, have to pass Sands’ Point, opposite New Rochelle. A bright idea came into my head. Thanks to Croly, I had a pocketful of money. One hour’s ride on a train took me to New Rochelle. A perfect fleet of valuable yachts were moored there for the winter, and nearly every one had an “old salt” for a keeper. Harboring myself in an inn where hot rum was plentiful, I soon had many friends. The “old salts” knew all about Long Island Sound, and the way I was taught to scale a rope ladder to a mast-head, and occasionally during the day scan the horizon with the glasses, made me feel that a sailor’s life was not a very bad one after all. But the weather set in very cold, even for the middle of February, and when the ropes became ice-laden my watch-tower was far from attractive.

One evening, when it was quite hazy, I could see dimly with the glasses from the top-mast yard a steam vessel, ploughing along in the dis-

tance, that looked unlike any of the tugs or other craft I had seen from time to time forging by. "That 's one of the gunboats," exclaimed the grim sailor-man at my side. There was a little tug waiting for me in the harbor with steam up. In a half hour, on board of that tug, I was alongside of the gunboat. Facts, figures, and incidents of the trip I got plentifully, and in return delighted the men on board (who apprehended that in the fog of the night before the other gunboat might have passed Sands' Point) with the information that their opponent had not passed.

It was late at night before I left New Rochelle. Hours had passed from the time I had hailed the first gunboat. The other had not yet come in sight when I got on the train for New York. It was easy now to tell which boat had won the race. I had the grim satisfaction early the next morning of handing to my two rivals, after they had reached the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a copy of my paper with a long report of the trip of the gunboat that won the race. By the time they had been able slowly to creep through a dense fog, after lying off City Island for quite a while, and arrive at the Navy Yard, their paper had gone to press. I became a *Herald* man very shortly after this good luck. Getting even with Uncle Sam for snubbing me made me as happy as did the "beat" I secured.

A "MAGNIFICENT BEAT"



A "MAGNIFICENT 'BEAT.'"

THE SURRENDER OF THE "VIRGINIUS."

BY MOSES P. HANDY.

IN view of possible hostilities with Spain growing out of the *Virginus* incident, the United States government determined to send to Cuban waters the ship *Worcester*, the flag-ship of the North Atlantic squadron, commanded by Captain W. D. Whiting, and bearing the broad pennant of Rear-Admiral George H. Scott. Sealed orders in execution of this determination were issued from the Navy Department, and every effort was made to keep the projected movement from the public. As usual, however, when newspaper men are on the alert, there was a leakage, and tidings of the *Worcester's* mission were transmitted from Norfolk, Virginia, where that man-of-war lay, to Richmond, where several of the New York newspapers were represented by occasional correspondents.

At that time I was news editor of the Richmond *Dispatch*, and the correspondent on call

for the New York *Tribune*. The *Herald* was represented in Richmond, as it is now, by its principal Southern correspondent, Mr. E. Cuthbert, and the correspondent of the *Times* was Colonel W. C. Elam, since editor of the Richmond *Whig* and Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

At midnight, on Saturday the 17th of November, 1873, I sat with several other newspaper men in the office of the agent of the New York Associated Press in Richmond. The pending troubles of the United States with Cuba, and the possibilities of war were under discussion. It was stated that the *Worcester* was to sail on the 19th for Cuban waters, and that the correspondent of the New York *Herald* had already communicated that fact to Mr. Bennett. On the impulse of the moment I seized a piece of paper and sent this despatch to New York :

“WHITELOW REID, *Tribune*, New York :

“Flag-ship *Worcester* leaves Norfolk under sealed orders early Monday. *Herald* will have man on board. Shall I go or send ?”

The following day was one of anxiety. I did not happen to remember at the time that the *Tribune* editorial rooms were deserted on Saturday, that paper not having a Sunday edition. It was not until five o'clock on Sunday evening that my answer came. Mr. Reid's instructions were in these words, brief and to the point :

"Go. Orders at Norfolk. Draw for expenses."

Not a moment was to be lost. The last train for Norfolk had left hours before, and there was not another until the next day. If my instructions had come in time to take that train, the expense of transportation would have been only three or four dollars. As it was, if I could get from Richmond to Norfolk in time at all, it would be at a great expense, and expense which I must incur on my own responsibility. There was not time to communicate again with the office, and to seek new instructions might be to cancel an assignment which I recognized as affording me a long-sought opportunity of doing effective work for some metropolitan newspaper.

My first thought was to charter a locomotive for a solitary night-ride of over one hundred miles; but none could be had, for love or money. Next, almost hopelessly, I turned to water transportation by way of the James River. No steamer would leave until the next morning. At length, however, after scouring the wharves, I succeeded in chartering a city tug-boat, for the use of which it was necessary to obtain a permit from the president of the city council, whom I dragged out of his pew in church and prevailed upon to help me.

But the permit did not foot the bill. The price charged and to be paid in advance was

three hundred dollars,—just about one hundred times the usual fare between Richmond and Norfolk. For this amount I drew upon the home office ; with grave misgivings, I must confess, whether so large a draft would be honored. Luckily I met, in the nick of time, my brother Elam, who had received orders meanwhile from the New York *Times* to go to Norfolk, and had about given up the idea of getting there before the sailing of the *Worcester*. With some difficulty I persuaded him to share with me the expense which I had incurred, and took his check for one half of the amount, the understanding being that each would depend upon his own resources on arriving at our destination. With only an hour's preparation, and only that much notice to our respective families, we took the boat in a blinding storm, and started on our long journey. Meanwhile, we learned that the *Herald* correspondent, having received his orders six hours earlier, had taken the regular train and was already in Norfolk.

Crowding on all steam the boilers would bear, the *Frank Summers*, with her two sea-sick passengers, ploughed her way down the James River, and in shorter time by some hours than is usually employed in the journey by water we reached Norfolk Harbor, with only half an hour's margin before the time fixed for the departure of the *Worcester*. It was the work of only a few moments for us to be transferred in

a small boat from the deck of the dirty little tug to the shining quarter-deck of the man-of-war.

A damper greater than the pouring rain, which was falling in torrents, awaited me in the Admiral's cabin. The old gentleman was courtesy personified : polite but inexorable, he could not violate the regulations of the navy. He had no authority to take passengers on a government ship,—least of all a newspaper correspondent. Nothing but an order from the President or the Secretary of the Navy would justify such a course ; and even if that was secured, it was not in his power to provide accommodations for newspaper men ; the ward-room was the home of the officers, and its hospitality could be extended only on their recommendation. The *Herald* representative had just gone over the side of the ship a rejected applicant for passage, although fortified by the recommendation of naval officers high in rank. Only one chance remained ; the storm now raging would prevent the departure of the ship until the succeeding day ; meanwhile, the correspondents might communicate with Washington or their home offices and secure an order from the proper authorities. This was a forlorn hope, evidently, in the Admiral's estimation, and in mine forlorn but worth trying.

Ashore through the storm went the correspondents, and soon the telegraph wires were laden with messages to Washington, Philadelphia, and

New York in search of Secretary Robeson, whose whereabouts were at best conjectural. Not until the next morning came the reply for which I was momentarily waiting. A reporter had found the Secretary in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where, after much persuasion, the Secretary leaned upon a gun-carriage and wrote this message :

" Say to Admiral if he has no objections I have none."

Armed with this implied permission, I rushed to the river-side, only to find that the *Worcester* had sailed two hours before, and had too long a start to be overtaken. On the wharf, trying to charter a tug-boat, having in his hand a permit, too late, like mine, from President Grant, was Mr. Elam. We mingled our strong language, if not our tears together ; then he went his way, and I mine, and, like Bunyan's Pilgrim, " I saw him no more,"—that is, for thirty days.

It turned out afterwards that the *Times* correspondent went to Philadelphia under sealed orders, and took passage to Key West on a monitor, and that the *Herald* man, having failed to secure commission to enlist as assistant ship's printer on the *Worcester*, sought an overland route to the Antilles. My own plan was to take a mail-steamer from New York to Key West, feeling sure that I would be first at the seat of the expected war. Arriving at the *Tribune*

office with some misgivings as to whether my large drafts, with nothing to show for them, would not involve me in everlasting disgrace, I was surprised to find that I was an object of curiosity and a subject of commendation. Managing Editor Hassard not only patted me on the back, but astonished me by approving my plan of campaign and giving me *carte blanche* to go down and organize the *Tribune* bureau at the front. In five days I was at Key West, and found the flag-ship and a few other vessels of the North Atlantic squadron only a few hours ahead of me. Within a week I was exchanging dinners with the Admiral, and had established friendly relations with the officers generally by fitting up my rooms at the St. James Hotel as a club and head-quarters for their use when ashore. I had also received the honor of an invitation to join the ward-room mess of the *Worcester*, and was *persona grata* on the other vessels of the fleet. At Havana the *Tribune* correspondent was W. P. Sullivan, a live newspaper man ; at Santiago de Cuba was Ralph Keeler, a brilliant fellow, who was soon after murdered by Spanish volunteers ; and on every vessel of the fleet I had a special correspondent among the officers, armed with full and explicit instructions, and prepared for any emergency that might arise.

As the prospect of war gradually faded under the sunshine of diplomacy, it became apparent

that the great event of the campaign was to be the surrender of the *Virginus* ; and to obtain a full, accurate, and, if possible, explicit account of this incident was the ambition of every journalist in the field. The great difficulty in the way was that the time, place, and manner of the surrender were kept a profound secret even from the officers of the fleet. Here came into play the intricate and complex machinery which had been arranged, and the friendships which had been formed brought forth fruit waiting to be plucked. There were wires enough to be pulled, but how, which, when, and where, were the questions. Without resort to bribery or breach of faith, I discovered where the surrender was to take place, and the names of the vessel and the officer who were to receive it. Bahia Honda was the place, and the *Dispatch* was to receive the surrender. This was two days before the appointed time ; and during that period I laid three plans to bag my game. First, Mr. Sullivan at Havana was informed of the time and place of the surrender and requested to go overland to Bahia Honda, where the *Virginus* lay, to witness the ceremony, to write a description of the attendant scenes and incidents, and communicate it to me, or, in the event of my non-appearance, to cable the story from Havana direct to New York. Second, an attempt was made to charter a steamer, or the fastest pilot-boat at Key West, to take myself or another

representative of the *Tribune* to Bahia Honda close in the wake of the vessel designated to receive the surrender. Third, and most difficult and decidedly most desirable, I proposed to secure passage on the *Dispatch* with the receiving officer and the prize crew.

Mr. Sullivan was quick to comprehend the importance of his mission, and entered upon its execution ; with what success shall be related hereafter. In carrying out my second plan I met with obstacles and discouragements. The only suitable steamer in port could not to be spared for an indefinite period. The fastest pilot-boat was at sea, and the time of its return was uncertain. Inquiries had to be made with great care and secrecy, in order to keep the other correspondents off the scent. At length, at a night interview with the master of the pilot-boat *Mary Matilda*, a bargain was struck for a conditional charter of that vessel. The terms were one hundred dollars per day, the lessee to have exclusive control of the movements of the vessel, and the master not to know whither he was bound until at sea ; that the ship should not be absent more than four days ; that clearance-papers should be provided without trouble or cost to the owner, and that in case the *Mary Matilda* should return to Key West in advance of any other vessel on the same errand, the master should receive a bonus of fifty dollars and the crew ten dollars apiece. This bargain

was concluded on Saturday night. On the following day, in the evening of which the *Dispatch* was to sail, the master of the schooner came to his employer in great alarm, fearing that he was about to be implicated in some piratical filibustering or other unlawful scheme, and raised his price to five hundred dollars for the ship. This advance being agreed to under protest, the greedy salt raised his figures to six hundred dollars, and then to eight hundred dollars. This extortion was held under consideration, if for no other reason, to keep the vessel from falling into the hands of rival correspondents. The skipper of the *Mary Matilda* was told to hold himself in readiness to sail at a moment's notice, while I bent all my energies to the plan which I had most at heart.

At noon on Sunday it was apparent that the projected movement could not be kept secret much longer. The fleet and the town were agitated by rumors, and the men of the *Herald* bureau, whose suspicions were aroused by the *Tribune* correspondent's appearance in close confab with seafaring men, and who knew that the surrender must shortly take place, were confirmed in suspicion by an order from the Admiral that all correspondents should leave the ships of the fleet.

Enterprising and alert for any possible chance that might arise, Mr. Stevens, chief of the *Herald* corps, applied to the Admiral for permission to

take passage on whatever vessel might be designated to receive the surrender. This request was refused, and Mr. Stevens then chartered the fast pilot-boat *Nonpareil*, instructing her master to watch the movements of the fleet, and await his orders. He then in friendly banter challenged me to a race to Cuba and return.

This challenge was accepted with much show on my part of having had my intentions uncovered. The news of the proposed race quickly became the talk of the town, and my ostentatious preparations therefore served as a capital cloak for my real purpose.

At three o'clock in the afternoon I sent my baggage by the hand of a friend to the flag-ship, and soon after followed it in person, avowedly in acceptance of an invitation to dine with the ward-room officers. One of the *Herald* staff saw me to the wharf. While at dinner I formed and rejected half a dozen schemes to get on board the *Dispatch*. At length a decision was made and promptly carried into effect. Taking aside an officer of high rank and influence, upon whose friendship I could count for any proper purpose, I confided to him the details of the approaching surrender, and the absolute necessity of my being introduced under proper auspices to the commander of the *Dispatch*. My friend grasped the situation and promised co-operation and secrecy.

It was dusk when we left the ship in a steam-

launch with the chaplain and others who were going ashore to attend divine service. At the landing all left the launch except my friend and myself, and he directed the coxswain to steer for the *Dispatch*. The coxswain murmured something about orders to return to the flag-ship at once, but, as the *Dispatch* was on the direct road to the flag-ship, and the officer was peremptory, his hesitation was momentary.

Drawing alongside of the *Dispatch*, we were hailed from the deck, and invited aboard on my friend's assurance that he had come to make a hurried call on Captain Rodgers. The officer of the deck was a man who knew a thing or two, and not only manifested no surprise when I told the coxswain to pass up my luggage, but asked no questions even when I asked one of the men on watch to send it down to the ward-room. While I passed the time of day with this officer, my friend from the flag-ship sought the Captain, and in brief conversation was good enough to give him the assurance that my presence on the ship had no nefarious object, and that my success would gratify his shipmates. The intermediary then departed, simply giving me a cheerful good-night, which meant that the coast was clear.

It was my cue now to get out of sight as quickly as possible, and I did. After a few minutes in the ward-room, where I tried to make myself agreeable and to avert questioning by

volubility, I suddenly feigned indisposition and asked permission to lie down. A hospitable officer who was just going on watch invited me to occupy his bunk, and thenceforth for hours it was my chief anxiety to have my presence on the ship forgotten.

It was my first experience as a stowaway, and my sensations were not agreeable. All had gone well, so far, but what if I were on the wrong tack? Suppose the *Dispatch* was not the ship assigned to receive the surrender? What if the vessel were going north instead of south? It was not reassuring to hear somebody at the mess-table say that our destination was Pensacola. After a while there was a noise overhead. Somebody was boarding the ship. I crept up the companion-way, unable longer to lie quiet. The pilot had come aboard. This meant nothing, except that the *Dispatch* was going to sail somewhere. He knew nothing, or, if he did, he would n't tell. He was under sealed orders. This was encouraging, but not conclusive. Presently encouragement blossomed into assurance. An engineer officer and seventeen men with hammocks, from the receiving-ship, came aboard. This must be a prize crew. It was enough for wits sharpened by anxiety. Now to keep out of sight again. No sooner thought than done. To get below, turn in my friend's bunk, and go fast asleep was the work of about five minutes.

• When I awoke the night was far spent. I

could feel that we were at sea. Wide awake in a moment, I ran on deck. It was moonlight. A little group of officers stood apart. I recognized Captain W. D. Whiting, chief of staff of the North Atlantic squadron, the officer appointed to receive the surrender of the *Virginus*; Lieutenant Adolph Marix, flag-lieutenant; Lieutenant-Commander Rodgers, commander of the *Dispatch*; and Ensign Calhoun, destined to be the prize-master of the *Virginus*. The recognition was mutual. For a moment only was I in doubt as to my reception. The ranking officer gave the cue. "Mr. Handy!" said Captain Whiting, "is it possible!" And then, extending his hand, "Mr. Handy, I am glad to see you aboard, sir." There was a shaking of hands all around. Secrecy as to the destination of the vessel and the details of the programme were no longer necessary, and in the conversation following I gleaned all the information desirable to perfect my plan of campaign.

At ten o'clock the next morning the blue hills of Cuba were in full view, and the *Dispatch* was carefully feeling her way, mindful of the danger of possible torpedoes, into the harbor of Bahia Honda.

There lay the notorious filibustering steamer *Virginus*. As the *Dispatch* steamed by the fort of San Marino the *Virginus* was sighted, and as we drew toward her the American flag was hurriedly and prematurely drawn up to the

mast-head of our prize. We came to anchor, and were soon boarded by a Spanish officer from a corvette, which lay about two miles farther away. In an interview between this officer and Captain Whiting, of which this writer was permitted to be an auditor, it was agreed that the formal ceremony of transfer should take place on the following morning at nine o'clock. This delay was most unwelcome to me, as it gave my rivals at Key West eighteen hours to find out where we had gone, and to catch up with us. Sure enough, they were on our track. A couple of hours before nightfall my heart sank within me when our pilot sighted a trim-looking schooner at the mouth of the harbor.

With a strong glass I saw that she was flying the American flag, and above it another with the legend "New York Herald." During the night my wideawake competitors had heard of the departure of the *Dispatch*, and had given chase on the *Nonpareil*. Having observed no signs of life on my *Mary Matilda* as she lay at her wharf, and not suspecting for a moment that the *Tribune* correspondent was snugly stowed away on the *Dispatch*, they were joyous in anticipation of an exclusive report of the great event for which everybody was waiting.

As they entered the harbor, a small boat was seen to put off from the Spanish fleet. It was an officer whose challenge brought the American schooner to a halt.

Messrs. Stevens and Cowardin, the correspondents, had shipped as members of the crew, and their unsailorlike appearance aroused the suspicions of the boarding officer, who decided that the schooner's papers were unsatisfactory. Such a *contretemps* had been anticipated by me in arranging my second plan, and it would doubtless have been overcome had I taken passage on the *Mary Matilda*, for I had not only provided myself with a passport, but had taken out regular clearance-papers for the vessel, her destination being "Belize, Honduras, touching at Bahia Honda." The *Herald* men remonstrated with the officer, but to no avail. They were obliged to put about, and were soon out of sight. These movements were watched with great interest from the deck of the *Dispatch*. Unaware of what had passed on board the schooner, my thought was that my rivals, having seen the American flag flying on the *Virginus*, would conclude that the surrender had taken place. Under that assumption they would naturally return to Key West and put a story on the wire, thus rendering futile my efforts to secure a "beat." Instead of doing this, however, they remained in the offing all night, and bright and early the next morning made a second attempt to pass the fort. To my relief, they failed again, and were ordered to proceed immediately to sea, or take the consequences in a shot from the fort. After vainly trying to attract our

attention by signals of distress, they chose to obey the order, and were seen no more.

When at nine o'clock on Tuesday, the 16th of December, the formal delivery of the *Virginus* to the United States authorities took place, it was my good fortune to be the first, after the receiving officer, to board the prize, and the only civilian who witnessed the transfer. During the ceremony a gig came over from the Spanish frigate, *La Favorita*, with an American claiming to have business on the *Dispatch*. He proved to be Mr. Sullivan, my colleague from Havana. Thus it was that the first plan of campaign had borne fruit. Mr. Sullivan's trip from Havana to Bahia Honda overland on horseback had been full of danger and not without adventure. His footsteps had been dogged by Spanish spies, and he travelled the whole distance in the unwelcome company of a police agent. Nothing but indomitable perseverance and the utmost caution, coupled with sound discretion, saved him from arrest and imprisonment, although he was armed with a passport duly *viséd*. He arrived in time, however, to have secured a report of the surrender if either or both of his colleague's other plans had failed.

The *Virginus* being in an unseaworthy condition, some hours elapsed before she could be patched up and she and her convoy were got to sea. Even then she leaked so much, and her

engines were so inefficient that we feared she would go to the bottom,—which in fact she did a day or two later. Mr. Sullivan took my old quarters on the *Dispatch*, and I spent the night on the *Virginus*. It was a night of horrors, now dimly remembered. The next morning we were overhauled by the United States ship, *Fortune*, which had come out from Key West to see if assistance was needed. To my dismay, I then learned that Captain Whiting's orders were to take his prize to Dry Tortugas, which was a long distance from any telegraph office. Dreading the delay which this would occasion in getting off our despatches, I requested Lieutenant Marix to "wigwag a signal" to Captain Whiting that if either of the vessels in convoy was going to Key West, we should be allowed to take passage thereon. The request was made in the nick of time, for the reply came immediately, "*Fortune* will go to Key West. Send Handy aboard at once." Although the sea was running high, boats were lowered from the *Virginus* and the *Dispatch*, and the correspondents were speedily transferred to the *Fortune*. The vessels now separated, the *Dispatch* and the *Virginus* heading for Tortugas, while the *Fortune* crowded on all steam for Key West.

We arrived the middle of the same afternoon. The harbor was anxiously scanned for the *Nonpareil* and the *Herald* flag. Neither was to be seen. We were reassured. In a very few min-

utes I was on the quarter-deck of the flag-ship, and through an orderly reported my arrival to the Admiral. That officer summoned me to his cabin into his presence.

"Admiral," I said, "I have hastened to give you the first news of the surrender of the *Virginus*."

"The surrender!" said the Admiral. "Were you there?"

Without further parley I proceeded to detail the events of the preceding day. "As we entered the harbor of Bahia Honda, Captain Rodgers——"

"Stop," interrupted the Admiral. "You entered with Captain Rodgers! How did you go?"

"I went on the *Dispatch*, sir."

The Admiral's surprise was manifested as much in his countenance as in the ejaculation which sprang from his lips. Ignoring his question as to how I managed it, I availed myself of his eagerness to hear the news, and told him my story. The stern expression gradually relaxed, and the old veteran extended his hand most cordially, saying, "Well, sir, I congratulate you. You deserve success. Let me send my despatch to the Navy Department, and then you may go ashore and do what you please."

Very quickly, you may be sure, the wires were conveying the details of the surrender under the Gulf of Mexico to Punta Rassa on the Florida

mainland, and thence overland to New York. The report was complete, and as graphic as the pen of a sea-sick correspondent could write it. It occupied several columns of the next morning's *Tribune*. The *Herald* boys turned up while I was at breakfast that day, and we received despatches from the home offices at about the same time. Mine read,—

“Your despatch magnificent beat. The *Herald* kept printers and made second edition at seven o'clock to copy it in full.

“WHITELOW REID.”

It was a victory won from foemen worthy of any correspondent's steel. Good fellows they were. Each had won laurels of his own, and each no doubt had better beats than mine to his credit, and stories of more prowess to tell. It is the pleasantest of memories that we were friends, although in the field we neither asked nor gave quarter. Stevens, Cowardin, Case!—all three are now dead.



THE NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATOR



THE NEWSPAPER ILLUSTRATOR.

BY MAX DE LIPMAN.

I DON'T know that any one ever started in life with the distinct end in view of becoming a newspaper illustrator. Men drift into that profession. This usually happens to artists who have either found out that their ambition does not match their ability, or who prefer a comfortable income, and the one-day glory accorded to an occasionally successful cartoon, to the higher aim of having their names recorded with those of Raphael, Rubens, and Michael Angelo at the expense of their stomachs.

Years ago I was engaged in that kind of uphill struggle, full of fanciful yearnings for laurel wreaths, renown, and all that sort of thing, and meanwhile making a living by "prostituting art" to the extent of painting portraits for the equivalent of a week's board, or supplying the managers of rural Sunday-school sociables with charcoal drawings of the donkey with the adjustable tail, so essential to the enjoyment of church-folk gatherings.

That was in a small town in Illinois. It so happened that the editor of one of the local newspapers conceived the idea of supplementing certain scathing prohibition articles with cartoons, and, after a number of prolonged consultations, he eventually entrusted me with the execution thereof.

The Chicago people who photo-engraved those first efforts of mine never omitted to state in their letters that my drawings had to be retouched in order to accommodate them to that method of reproduction ; and in truth it must be stated that the sketches were poor and feeble ; but still they conveyed the intended meaning to the minds of the rural readers of the paper. In fact, the cartoons proved to be such a success that it was decided to touch also on local political affairs. The consequence of this was that a number of insignificant petty politicians were dignified by having themselves caricatured in a more or less offensive manner.

One dark night I was attacked by friends of an alderman whom I had, under instructions of the editor, represented in an uncomplimentary attitude. The hospital bill was quite large, as I had to remain under medical care for some time. Though my chief was glad to welcome me on my reappearance in the office, he held out a hint to me to treat national subjects rather than local ones. He did not fear consequences, but, being a business-man, he naturally preferred

to print in the future only the caricatures of people who would not be likely to saddle hospital bills upon a small country paper.

That is how the pictures of Tim Murphy of the eighth ward and Barney Mahoney of the thirteenth gave way to those of Benjamin F. Butler, Charles A. Dana, Roscoe Conkling, and others. Of course, whenever it was possible to make a drawing of any object of current interest, such as a railroad catastrophe, an accident in the stone-quarries, and the like, I had to do it also, and eventually devoted all my time to the paper, where I "did" likewise local reportorial work in odd moments, so soon as I had acquired the "A disastrous conflagration visited the barn in the rear of Bob Allen's palatial two-story residence" style of writing.

From the country *Periwinkle* to a metropolitan newspaper is a lengthy road, by the side of which the journals of cities of from one hundred thousand souls upward are the resting places.

Thus it was that I became acquainted with newspaper work in general, and the illustrator's task in particular, as it is applied in various cities,—to wit, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and elsewhere. This is, I suppose, a quite common mode of introduction to the illustrator's profession.

It need not be especially mentioned that competition among newspaper illustrators is as keen as among reporters, and to get a "beat" on a

brother-artist is a proud achievement. When a man has once shown himself capable of judging news and selecting the right episodes of any event for illustration, then come the odd experiences. Such a one I had on the occasion of being sent by a Cincinnati paper to "do" a hanging in Lexington, Kentucky. I received my instructions about two A.M., and, as they called for my taking train at six-thirty A.M., I had but little time to recover from a hard day's work, during which I had mostly paddled about on the Ohio River in order to get pictures of flooded houses. However, I was aboard the train on time, with a portfolio under my arm. The tracks from the Central Depot run along an old canal-bed, and as the train slowly ploughed its way through the muddy water I made eye-measurements of its depth by looking at the wheels of cars on other tracks. I calculated that there were about six inches of water, and carefully noted it down.

We arrived in Lexington two hours behind time. I looked at my watch upon reaching the depot, and found I had but thirteen minutes left to reach the jail. To my discomfiture, the local correspondent of my paper was not there to meet me, as he had been instructed. However, there was no time to lose. I had myself driven down town, and reached the gray stone building about eleven-forty, or five minutes before the time set for the hanging. An immense crowd

of country-people surrounded the place and eyed me curiously.

As I had no ticket of admission, the deputy-sheriffs who guarded the entrance refused to admit me. Unluckily, I did not have even a card which would identify me as a newspaperman. I lost two precious minutes parleying with them. In despair I opened my portfolio and made a rapid sketch of one of them,—just a few bold strokes with the soft pencil, but still it gave the main features of the man sufficiently to establish a resemblance. It took only a minute to do it, but the effect showed me that I had not miscalculated the ordinary curiosity of average people when in the proximity of an artist at work ; not only did it cause the two men to relax their sternness, but they eventually admitted me upon my promising to show them the sketches of the hanging.

I reached the jail-yard about a minute and a half before the condemned man was led out upon the scaffold. Within that time I had made a rough draught of the gallows surrounded by the fifty spectators allowed admission by the law, with the bare stone wall, and the tree-tops and a section of roof, crowded with curious on-lookers, visible above, for a background. Of course the sketch would hardly have conveyed any meaning to others, but to myself it was sufficient to establish the relative proportions of the picture in such a manner, that I could easily

incorporate the principal actors in the drama into it at the proper time. I had squeezed myself into a corner between the wall and one of the buttresses to escape notice, but still a number of men espied me, and so powerful is curiosity, that with them it predominated even in the face of the tragedy about to be enacted. I found myself immediately surrounded by a crowd.

Presently the unseemly noise in the yard ceased, and the clinking of iron locks was heard. Then came the tread of heavy shoes on the resonant stone pavement, and the little procession, headed by a Catholic priest in full vestments, traversed the yard and ascended the wooden steps to the fatal platform. The sight of a Catholic priest in surplice and stole on a scaffold is a very rare one, and I therefore selected the moment of his administering the last rites to the wretch who stood pale and swaying beneath the dangling noose, for my principal picture. Behind the condemned man stood the sheriff and his deputies. It certainly was an impressive scene. I felt particularly grateful to the reverend gentleman for making his exhortation rather lengthy, thereby prolonging for a few moments the life about to be extinguished ; but, if the truth must be told, it was not for sentimental reasons. It simply enabled me to draw a more careful portrait of the victim.

So much for being accustomed to all kinds of terrible scenes. The next important moment

was the one when the priest's tear-dimmed eyes looked with an expression of supreme pity upon the livid features of the condemned man, as he moved away, and the latter saw before him the stern face of the hangman instead. The pinioning of the arms, and a portrait of the father of the woman whose murder was being avenged, completed my sketches of the event.*

I do not think that the execution occupied more than twelve minutes ; and in that time I had to prepare four sketches. There was barely time for me to get my dinner and drive back to the depot. I reached the depot just as the train was pulling out. Luckily, it had one of the Mann boudoir cars ; I engaged a section, adjusted the table, and completed my sketches on the homeward journey.

At the next stopping-place I sent a telegram to my superiors informing them that I had successfully covered the assignment. I asked them to telegraph me to a station which would be reached two hours later, at what rate the Ohio River was rising. The answer came, "Two inches an hour." It was nearly four o'clock when I again crossed the river, nine hours after having left Cincinnati. I laid my plans accordingly.

When we came to McLean Avenue, the last stop before reaching the depot, I espied a single

* This was during the early days of illustrating, when the public taste had not yet declared against the delineation of repulsive scenes.

carriage in waiting. As the train slowed down I jumped off, ran to the vehicle as fast as my legs could carry me and ordered the driver to drive to the office. As the carriage turned down a side-street five blocks from the depot, I looked through the little rear-window. The passengers were just leaving the train. My calculation had proved correct.

The river had risen eighteen inches since morning. There had been six inches of water in the old canal-bed then, and there were twenty-four now. The fire-box of an ordinary locomotive engine is about twenty-inches above ground, so that it was impossible for one to reach the Central Depot. On the other hand, as I had engaged the only carriage at McLean Avenue, the other passengers (my apologies to them), but more especially one certain artist in the employ of another daily journal, were left to their own devices for reaching the down-town district, where I arrived at least three quarters of an hour in advance of any of them.

The rival newspaper's account of the hanging was meagrely illustrated with one hurriedly executed cut, while the paper represented by me printed all the drawings I had made on the spot.

But the newspaper illustrator's life is not entirely replete with exciting events that stimulate his enthusiasm and serve to imbue him with

love for his work. There are long weary seasons of murder-trials to be heard, or political gatherings to be attended, for the purpose of getting the portrait of some commonplace-looking man or woman who persistently manages to conceal his or her features. This is often the more exasperating as the "victim" frequently does so quite unintentionally. Then there are the ghastly sights of a holocaust, a collapse, mine-disasters, railway horrors, and the long chain of accidents which bring death in its most repulsive aspect to human beings. The artist is the one attaché of a newspaper who must see the terrible havoc wrought, must gaze upon horribly-mutilated corpses, upon the terror of frantic survivors, and upon the heart-rending grief of those who find almost by intuition only the shapeless remains of their kin beneath the shattered timbers of a railway-train, or the smouldering fragments of a burned building. What is more, he must try to keep cool and collected, because tremulous nervousness is incompatible with good drawing.

But the public demands of a newspaper that it show at least a suggestion of a horrible scene, beyond the stirring accounts given in letter-press, and the artist must at those times be deaf to the pleadings of his heart, and work because it is his duty to his employers and to his family and to himself.

The dear public usually furnishes the ludicrous element in the illustrator's life. It is so very curious, this dear public. Let the poor representative of pictorial journalism appear upon any street or anywhere else in public, and betray his occupation by the modest way in which he squeezes into an out-of-the-way corner, by the sketch-book and the up-and-down look of his eyes, and he at once becomes an irresistible centre of attraction to passers-by, and while, of course, none of the adult ones would be ill bred enough to look over the shoulder of a man writing a business letter, they think nothing of intruding upon the man who makes his memoranda a fac-simile of the things he wishes to remember. Grown persons are, however, easily got rid of in a very simple manner if the artist can keep his temper until his uninvited visitor asks questions, which he will sooner or later as surely as the sun shines. There is only *one* question asked of the experienced illustrator, and that is, "Are you sketching?" which, in view of the open book with its clear, concise sketches, is a superfluous insult. The answer which turneth away the bore is, "No, sir ; I am fishing for turtles," whereupon the intruder usually feels quite aggrieved, and resolves to no longer honor the artist with his presence.

It is not quite so easy to get rid of the small boy, bless his heart, for he is always willing to

carry the sketch-book or camp-chair for you, and is proud if you let him do it.

I did get rid of quite a drove of them once, though; and it was like this. My orders called for a number of pictures of old bridges. I sat upon a log near one of them, and within two minutes was surrounded by about forty urchins of assorted sizes and questionable cleanliness, who were all at the same time anxious to see me work. At first I tried a usually successful scheme; that is, I appointed two of the largest boys special policemen, with strict orders to keep the other gamins at a distance. However, the appointees exercised their authority with more zeal than discretion, and within four minutes from the time I had bestowed their official titles upon them I could see them vanishing behind some freight-cars, closely pursued by a crowd of angered urchins.

The situation was certainly growing critical as regarded the best interests of the bridge-pictures. Something desperate had to be done. At last a happy thought struck me, and, turning to the nearest one of the little nuisances, I said, "Now, boys, I want to sketch one or two of you in swimming beneath the bridge."

No sooner had I uttered the words than the entire band made a dash for a flat-boat lying close to shore, undressed themselves, and jumped into the water.

I finished my sketch without further annoy-

ance. But whenever I see now a little boy afflicted with a very bad cold, I experience pangs of conscience, and I am haunted by a vision of the ghosts of forty naked little boys who had gone in swimming one chilly May-day under an impulse diabolically given by myself.



HEARING MY REQUIEM



HEARING MY REQUIEM.

BY GEORGE ALFRED TOWNSEND ("GATH").

TWENTY years ago, a rich newspaper, through the eruption of a new managing editor, heaped tasks upon me, paying me by the column, and though I was not a member of the staff, so called, under any obligation to be sent hither and thither at the editor's behest, an affectation of feudal authority in the paper caused its instructions to me to be in peremptory tones, such as, "Proceed immediately to Russell County, Virginia ; go to Forsytheville and interview Judge Stam ; find out all about the homicides !—SNORKEY."

Consulting my map, I found no such localities in the State ; but I was so well aware of the hap-hazard way of sending forth commands from that place that I started for Virginia, and telegraphed for more instructions to meet me upon the train. The Richmond agent of the paper also missed me, but forwarded a letter which I received in North Carolina. Some private inquiries had rendered it probable that

the scene of my investigations was to be the latter State, and the key to explore that region was the city of Wilmington. It was, I think, the year 1872.

An occasional correspondent of the paper at Wilmington set me in order. He took me to the president of the railroad which skirted the South Carolina boundary, proceeding westward toward Charlotte, but at that day this railroad, since completed, terminated in air, in the midst of the swamp and forest lands about the sources of the Pedee River. The president had been a Northern man, and had a cool head. He told me that a conflict between the authorities of one of the interior counties and certain free mulattoes had been going on since the middle of the Civil War, and had become worse by bloodshed; until within a recent period some twenty startling assassinations had taken place. The whites for the moment were cowed, and unable to capture the ringleaders of the mulattoes, who were known as the Lowery band or family. The president said, with the habitual caution of white men in the minority at that time, that he thought I would find wrong on both sides, and not all the wrong on the part of the mulattoes. "But," said he, "there can be no question that they will have to be exterminated. You can take sides or you can occupy middle ground, but you had better proceed cautiously, as much ignorance pervades that

sequestered community, and I advise you not to publish your conclusions until you have left the region."

I spent a day in Wilmington, as only one train proceeded to the seat of disturbance every twenty-four hours, and visited the jail, where some of the mulattoes had been brought for safe-keeping until the court at Lumberton should begin its sessions, which would be the next day but one. Though I was very quiet and private in my researches, it was soon apparent, when I took the train next day, that my business was understood, for the conductor, to assist my sketching the different localities, would hold the train up until I had finished. In the train was a sheriff, or deputy sheriff, taking cousins of the Lowerys, persons by the name of Oxendine, I think, to Lumberton : they were heavily ironed, but their appearance was generic ; they were nearly white mulattoes, of a Highland Scotch admixture, relics, probably, of the Jacobite emigration to this province after the defeat of the Young Pretender, whose particular guide, Flora Macdonald, had married her cousin, a leading man of the clan Macdonald, and both had settled in North Carolina a little previous to the Revolutionary War, where, not intending to figure in two rebellions against the king, they organized his loyal subjects, and Macdonald was captured and taken to Pennsylvania, where he was kept a prisoner

during much of the war. Upon the train was a strange, sporadic judge, a native of the State, I think, who had been reconstructed under what was called the Scalawag dominion and commissioned to try offenders. He seemed to know very little about these homicides in that extensive State, and somewhat muddled the thread of the sheriff's conversation with me by his asseverations that if he found thus and so when he got to the seat of justice, he would in person go out among those outlaws, and summon them in the name of the court to come in and be punished. "Yes, sah ! I'll do that to-morry or nex' day, sah !"

We were a long time reaching Lumberton, and I marvelled at the primitive character of the country and its pretty hamlets, as we steamed along at little more than a trotting horse's pace. My head was bruised with reminiscences, and my pocket-book full of notes, when finally we arrived at Lumberton, some time in the afternoon, and found a scattered town of wooden houses, weather-blackened by time and want of paint, and at the principal hotel I had given me the bang-up room, next to the judge, which was a sort of attic, with low, flat windows. Nearly everybody in the place had a Scotch name, blacks as well as whites. The court-house was a large building, like a two-storied church, as I now remember it, with an open area or field before it, in which I think was an old pole well.

The town seemed to be crowded with persons who had come to attend the court, and among them were a good many exceedingly handsome mulatto girls. It seemed to me that if I had been in some distant province of Asiatic Turkey I could hardly have found a general society so unaware of any greater World, and so disconnected from its methods and understandings. Little booths of groceries were the centres of public concentration, and the trade seemed to be of that character which one might encounter in the oasis of the sandy Sahara Desert, at the times of caravans and fairs.

As I must either take a buggy and drive out to the locality of the outlaws, twelve miles or more distant, which bore the name of Scuffletown, or await the next day's train, which would carry me to a station called Shoe Heel, somewhat nearer the trail of blood, I took advice from the better townsmen, and particularly from the merchants and those politicians who were in sympathy with the political *status quo*. All told me not to venture into Scuffletown with a horse or buggy, or, if I went there in such fashion, to be sure to go alone or to take no one with me who could be identified as of the white minority. In any event it seemed to be the notion that I would have trouble, or, if no trouble, at least privations, as Scuffletown was not a place, in the usual conception of an instituted hamlet. Neither hotel nor stores would I find, they

said, but merely little cabins in the woods among sandy streams and swamps, and if benighted out there I might never again be heard of. In short, the population was a good deal scared, for, as they described it, several of their "best people" had been put to death, and the temper and hardihood of the mulattoes were increasing wickedly.

A weekly newspaper was published in Lumberton, of which I procured a file from the editor, running back several years, and sitting in my twilighted room I annotated all the paragraphs I could find there about the crimes, threatenings, and escapes of these mysterious people. These paragraphs were seldom more than a few hundred words in length, but after working several hours I came to some intelligent comprehension of the task before me.

The next morning the court opened with more *éclat* than we ever see in the populated North. A crier would come either to a door or to an upper window in the gable of the courthouse, and cry aloud, "Neil McNeil! Donald Macdonald! Angus Macpherson! Come into court, as you are this day ordered, to render testimony as to the things on which you will be questioned." At these Scotch summonses I would frequently see, not white men walk forward, but mulattoes, of the type I have described, and in some cases I noticed that these had bushy red hair, showing that the Highland pro-

genitors of these partial Africans had been able to dye their posterity's wool down to the third and fourth generations.

I was about thirty years old, and had been a correspondent in the Civil War, and had generally managed to cut out some plan of campaign, but this particular job was something of a foretaste of what my old contemporary war-correspondent Stanley was about that time doing in the wilds of Africa. He had something of an expedition, and could command an audience of the wild tribes among whom he went. Nor was there any war to impede Mr. Stanley's advance toward the hidden camp of Dr. Livingstone. Here in North Carolina was a race of Africans as old in the land as the oldest whites by descent, and for a long period of time, how long nobody seemed to know, they had been free, possibly manumitted in the early portion of our century, when, through the influence of Benjamin Lundy, "Emancipation Societies" had been formed in many of the Southern States, and these had been nowhere more numerous and effective than in North Carolina, where Quakers and other peaceable sects listened with docility to the mild teachings of liberty which preceded Garrison's rougher hectorings and more unpromising propositions. Probably the white owners of such slaves had moved westward beyond the Blue Ridge or into Tennessee and even Indiana and Illinois. Thus made free, a

light mulatto generation had arisen, at the brink of the Civil War, which had the audacity of free people, the revengefulness of their Highland antetypes, and the looseness of the Africans.

Nothing had happened in the Old North State after the Revolutionary War to excite or ferment its population until the great Rebellion or Confederacy came to be organized, after the election of Mr. Lincoln. Then, as State after State met in convention and seceded from the Federal Union, North Carolina also took the stand that the Union without slavery must be resisted. From the bottom up came the spirit of war, the poor men having it perhaps even more resolutely than the planters and politicians.

Among these volunteers were the young free mulattoes of the Scuffletown district.

It was not thought meet, however, that these should stand in the ranks in defence of race slavery. They were not considered to have military rights, but only laborer's duties, and they were conscripted to go down below Wilmington and throw sand out of the ditches upon the fortifications. At this they rebelled, and some were ill used and others ran away, and in their absence from their native districts the whites, it was said, had outraged their households.

In course of time graver subjects of quarrel arose. There was a prison-pen at Florence, in South Carolina, nearly south of the Scuffletown

district, at a considerable distance, from which at times Northern soldiers escaped, and, working their way up through the swamps and untrackable parts, came to a settlement almost exclusively of negroes, in the Scuffletown region. The fugitives were gladly entertained by the mulattoes, and to provide enough food for these numerous and unexpected guests some raids were made upon the hogs of the nearest whites, and these hogs, being all marked for identification, were traced to the house of an old man named Lowery, who had sons and daughters. The story was told to me, but whether true or not, I refrain from passing judgment, that old Lowery in punishment of his hog-stealing and disloyalty was made to dig his grave and stand beside it to be shot dead.

He had a young son, who has passed into local history as Henry Berry Lowery, who made the further complaint that some of his young companions were killed because they had threatened white men of the conscription corps who had made nameless trespasses upon their households.

Whatever the circumstances, the younger mulattoes who grew to manhood after the war found deadly arms, and proceeded to kill such whites as they disliked or feared, and after every white man's assassination a raid was made upon the outlaws or their kin, who continued to be treacherously peaceable, and thus

by the unreasonableness of a vendetta the strife had gone on, until it now attracted the attention of the external world, and a managing editor desirous to serve up something red and spicy for his columns, had taken the initial step of sending me in to make the ragged narrative tangible.

I took the train the next day for Shoe Heel, still making sketches, as I went along, of the different stations, at each of which some murder had been done. These were published in *Harper's Weekly*. At one place the chief outlaw had waylaid constables as they were carrying off his wife and family for hostages, and had shot the former to death and delivered the latter. As near a race insurrection as has taken place in the South at any time was probable there, and there seemed to be an idea that the United States would come to the deliverance of the State authorities, after I should have developed the facts.

Shoe Heel was a good, large country store and a few sheds, and in a grove of pines near by was a frame house, newly constructed, which, for a consideration, entertained passengers. Here I conducted my investigations as people came in from the Scuffletown district.

I found the whites there suspicious of every new-comer, and several scamps in the guise of detectives had come among them who were suspected of having sold arms and ammunition to

the Lowerys. I did not know until afterward that my own errand was regarded askance. The idea of a newspaper in New York sending all that distance to describe a quarrel with negroes seemed absurd.

A poor old colored woman at one end of the store served my dinner, and, being alone with her, who was possibly a connection of the Lowerys, I questioned her closely, and found that she was the best witness in all that country. She alone seemed to grasp the idea that a newspaper had some connection with public opinion and might prevent crime or justify the resentments of an inferior race. I fear that the old woman suffered for some of her disclosures afterwards. My purpose, however, was to disclose a disconnected series of murders, lasting from 1863 down to the time of my visit, and numbering twenty-two.

As long as daylight lasted I kept cramming and analyzing upon this topic. Finally the shades of night descended, and I went over to the house in the pine grove to sleep.

It was the house of a Major——, who appeared to be looked up to in that district as the type of public spirit who would finally bring the Lowerys to bay.

He was not at home, but his wife was there, with a very young baby upon her knee, sitting before a pine-wood fire, and having nothing to say.

A mysterious gloom, almost like foreboding, came upon me, in this residence so far from any town, and so near Scuffletown, with its ever-lurking and now incarnadined fiends.

There was a drummer from Charleston, selling phosphates, in the house, and he had learned but a part of the story, and after we went to bed together we talked a long time about the Lowery episode.

It was nearly midnight when I attempted to go to sleep, and then the pine-trees moaned deep and sad, and now and then we could hear the baby cry down-stairs. I found it impossible to sleep, and at last I spoke to my companion, and said he, "This bloody story has made me feel so queer that, though I was in the war, in many a battle, I feel afraid in this house, as if something was going to happen to us!"

We did sleep, however, at last, and next morning I took the train for the all-day journey back to Wilmington. I did not commence to write anything on the subject of the Lowery band and its mysterious "queen" and "king," as they were called, until I was on the waters of the Chesapeake.

The accounts, being published in a series of four or five long letters, were widely read, and a young man living in Pennsylvania, among others, was so affected by them, that he offered to keep up the sensation by going into Scuffle-

town and interviewing the bandit "queen," who was the wife of Lowery.

He confirmed what I had intimated, that the principal outlaw was already dead, having shot himself accidentally. Neither element upon the spot was particularly pleased with my descriptions: the whites thought all the blame ought to have been thrown on the negroes, and the negroes considered that every victim on the other side had been a prosecutor. A play was presented at one of the Bowery theatres, called "The Swamp Angels," which was the highly colored head-line put over my letters in the newspaper by the intellectual or office department, and the hero of the play was made to be a reporter.

In the course of some seventeen years I was taken, in San Francisco, to the office of a daily newspaper, and introduced to its managing editor, whose name I at once identified as that of the young man who had embarked in our profession by the opportunity my Lowery disclosures had opened for him. In the meantime, after the usual mutations of an out-of-door writer, and figuring in the Cuban insurrection, he had arisen to be a managing editor.

Said he to me, "Do you know how close both you and I were to meeting our death at Shoe Heel?"

"No."

"Well, after you wrote your descriptions, the man who lived in that house where you slept read them, and he suspected that you had some knowledge of a criminal intimacy of his."

"I never heard anything of the sort."

"Nevertheless, it was true. When I followed you into that country I went to a woman's cabin, was entertained by her, and, after the usual fashion of those women, she told me this secret. Of course, all those people around there knew where I had gone. The instinctive wrongdoer followed you to kill you before you could leave that region and publish the tale in which he supposed his private scandal would appear. When I came to that country he resolved to kill me, lest he might be published in the same *rôle*. In either case he thought he would be burying an unpleasant secret. Fortunately, I did not go back to Shoe Heel, but took another course, and escaped, for I was warned that I was doomed to die that night.

"Well," concluded my friend, "you know what happened? That white man made an appointment, of a treacherous sort, with the remaining Lowery brothers and their cousins the Strongs. He meant to betray them, and they understood it. As he went to the rendezvous they waylaid him from behind one of the old log 'blinds' they were so deadly at manufacturing, and they filled him full of buckshot, and he died with the unforgiven thirst for murder in

his heart. Another train waited for by you would have altered both your fates."

Hearing this, my mind went back to the night at Shoe Heel, when there seemed to be something ghostly and ghastly in the moan of the pines, and we could not sleep.



THE SPORTING EDITOR



THE SPORTING EDITOR.

BY J. B. McCORMICK ("MACON.")

THE sporting editor has become a very important factor in daily journalism in the past decade. Previous to that time only a few important metropolitan dailies made any attempt to chronicle sporting events and gossip in departments separate from their local and general news. Except in the cases of racing or baseball, no special knowledge was thought to be needed to enable an ordinary reporter to write up a sporting event like a yacht-race, a prize-fight, or a billiard-match. Often the results were reports which were ludicrous in their inaccuracies and blunders.

Now even the most conservative of the great dailies employs a corps of trained specialists to describe and write of sporting events, and places them under the direction of a capable sporting editor. The New York *Tribune* has a deservedly high reputation for its racing reports. The *Evening Post* finds it profitable to devote a good deal of its space to comments on racing

and field games, while the *Mail and Express*, the most religious of metropolitan dailies, makes a great feature of tipping would-be winners on the leading race-tracks. Even the Philadelphia *Ledger* has fallen into line, and it now has a very valuable sporting department. In fact, no daily paper of consequence is now without expert sporting talent. It is no unusual thing for the New York *Sun* or the *Herald* to give up a page and more to reports of sporting events. Twenty-five years ago, no paper except the *Herald* would publish as much in a week. It is the same in the West and South ; and some of the brightest sporting writers in America are to be found in Chicago, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Omaha, Denver, New Orleans, and San Francisco. Much of the wonderful success of the Cincinnati *Enquirer* is due to its exceptionally full and accurate reports of sporting matters. I had the honor of starting this department and of nurturing it for years. In the early days it was thought to be the proper thing to apologize editorially for an extended report of a prize-fight with a paragraph like this : " As will be seen by reference to our news columns, another disgraceful exhibition known as a prize-fight has taken place. We call the attention of the authorities to this matter, and we earnestly hope they will do their duty ; and if they do, the fighters will hereafter, for a while at least, do the State good service, breaking stone, if their surplus muscular energy can-

not be utilized in another way." This was the regulation editorial antidote for the news bane. Nowadays, prize fights have become well-nigh obsolete, and "boxing-contests," which have taken their place, do not call forth such animadversions.

Forty years ago the average American was a far less perfect specimen of physical manhood than he is to-day. If college-bred, he ran to mentality at the expense of muscle, and men with sound minds in sound bodies were the exceptions rather than the rule. The Brother Jonathan type of man, hollow-cheeked and hollow-chested, round-shouldered, long-armed, and spindle-shanked, abounded.

In those days there were very few gymnasiums outside of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and New Orleans, and these were mainly conducted by men who were retired professional or semi-professional boxers, and to be known as an athlete was to be tainted with something of the reputation of a rough.

A few years later this state of affairs began to change for the better. Out of the games of rounders and three old cat developed that of base-ball. Then came the Civil War, which took a million of men from all parts of the land and put them into the field. A large proportion of them were city- and town-bred, used to the comforts and luxuries of life rather than its

hardships. All had to yield to discipline, and those who had been reared in the lap of luxury had, equally with those fairly well-to-do, to share with the poorest recruit the dangers, the privations, and the exposures of the camp, the march, and the battle-field. More died of hardship than perished by the sword or the bullet, but the great mass of those who went through the war unscathed returned to their homes, when gentle Peace had again spread her white wings over the land, far more rugged in body and mind than when they donned the blue or the gray. They had, too, unconsciously imbibed a love for physical strife and out-door exercise which, very fortunately, found a peaceful vent in athletics.

What middle-aged man does not feel the blood tingle in his veins when he remembers the triumphal tour of the famous "Red Stockings," who went through the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific without losing a game during the entire season? To base-ball more than to any other game is due the present love for sport which is almost universal in the United States, and to base-ball is primarily due not only much of the improvement in the physical condition of the American man and woman, but also the Sporting Editor.

To be competent to be at the head of the sporting department of a great daily newspaper, nowadays, a man must be thoroughly acquainted

with a great variety of games and sports. In aquatics he must be familiar with yachts and yachting, from the establishment of the Water Club of Cork, the oldest yachting-club in the world, down to the latest performance of *Gossoon* or of *Vamoose* and *Norwood*.

He must be well-informed on rowing, and be able to write interestingly on the introduction of the outrigger and the sliding-seat, as well as of the styles and performances of Hanlan, of Courtney, of Renfrew, or of Kemp. Of canoeing and swimming he must be equally intelligent.

Ball games he must know thoroughly, and base-ball, cricket, lawn-tennis, la crosse, hand-ball, foot-ball, polo, billiards, and bowling claim much of his attention. Of these base-ball is the most important. It is the "national game," and its politics is as intricate, as subtle, and often as difficult of comprehension as is the policy of either of the great national parties. He must either personally or through his subordinates know the "magnates," the managers, and the players of the game, intimately, if he would not be left behind in the race for news, for personal gossip of the doings of the diamond has as much interest for the average base-ball crank as has gossip of society or of the stage for the average reader. Thousands of men who never spoke a word to big Captain Anson, and never expect to, are fully aware of his pecu-

liarities and of his shrewdness in business as well as in his chosen profession ; and they are equally intimate with King Kelly, Buck Ewing, and Johnny Ward, thanks to the persistent paragrapher. As a matter of fact, half of the interest in base-ball is due to the descriptive work of the talented men who write of it and of those who play it as a means of livelihood.

It is the same with turf matters. Thanks to the ubiquitous race-writer, the public is kept pretty thoroughly informed not only as to the doings of the kings and queens of the course, their work and their performances, their outgoings and incomings, but also of the personal appearance and peculiarities of the men who breed, own, train, and run them. They know exactly what manner of "boy" rides them, and often a great deal about those who bet on them as well. Much of this information is obtained with great difficulty ; for horse-owners, especially the more aristocratic of them, like Fred Gebhard, Pierre Lorillard, A. J. Cassatt, and John Hunter, have an idea, derived from the English most probably, that the horses are their private property, and that the public has no right to ask for information about them. The late August Belmont, who was one of the shining lights of the American turf, once told a man, in my hearing, who rashly asked him if a colt he had in a race "had a chance," "Sir, you have no right to ask me such a question. When you

see a horse of mine named as a starter on a race-card, your only presumption should be that I think he has a chance of winning or I would not permit him to go to the post, that all has been done that is possible to prepare him for his task, and that every effort will be made to land him a winner. Any other inference, sir, is an insult, whether intended or not." Unfortunately for the turf, all owners of horses are not as high-minded and as honorable as was Mr. Belmont. More 's the pity.

The opportunities for cheating on a race-track are so many, and the rewards are so large and immediate, that it is a wonder that there is not more of it than there is. There would be, but for the sporting writer. He prowls around the stables, the saddling-paddock, the betting-ring, and the judges' stand. He circulates freely through the grand stand and the club-house. He has a large and valuable acquaintance with owners, trainers, rubbers, jockeys, bettors, and bookmakers. He can tell at a glance whether a horse looks fit or not, and by the aid of the most powerful field-glasses he follows every movement in a race from start to finish. Almost as good a judge of pace as Jimmy McLaughlin or Isaac Murphy, many times he can foretell the winner, with wonderful accuracy, before half the distance has been covered. He often does even better than this, and "tips" him in the morning issue of his

paper. A glance suffices to tell him if a horse has been "stiffened," and clever indeed must that jockey be who can pull or misride a horse without his eager eye detecting him.

The capable turf reporter is wonderfully well informed in his speciality. He knows race horses as thoroughly as an ordinary man knows his friends and acquaintances, and can recognize them at a glance as readily. I know at least six young men, connected with the sporting departments of New York dailies, who can name at sight almost any ordinarily well-known horse at work, even though he be hooded and blanketed from nose to tail. Every horse has his peculiarity of stride, just as every man has his own peculiar method of walking, and in some mysterious way this peculiarity impresses itself on the brain of the observant writer.

By the way, few people have a correct idea of the manner in which a horse-race is reported. "No man can chew meal and whistle at the same time," and no reporter, no matter how competent, can watch a field of six or more horses through a race, and then from memory write a correct account of it. He might give the main features; but he does not trust to his memory, but summons to his aid an assistant, who is known as a "caller." This gentleman watches the contest from start to finish through the aid of a powerful field-glass, meanwhile describing it to the reporter at his side, who

"places" the horses at the start and at every important intermediate point of the contest to the finish, between-times keeping his eyes on the contestants. From the data thus procured the report of the race is written. Ninety times out of a hundred, if printed verbatim it would be much more interesting than its substitute.

Here is about the way a caller describes a race. The horses are at the starting-post, and he is watching them intently. They are marshalled into line. Suddenly three or four of them shoot out in front as if fired from catapults, while the others stand still or wheel around. "No go!" he remarks, disgustedly, as he takes his glasses from his eyes, which he wipes tenderly and carefully, for it is a great strain on the optics to use field-glasses steadily, day by day, week in and month out. Back canter the horses, and again, often with great difficulty, something like a line is formed. The caller is alert. Suddenly they move forward as if impelled by one common impulse. "They're off," he cries, and as the words leave his lips the starter's flag falls. "It was rather a ragged send-off, too," he adds, "for Sumatra was n't up with her company, and Hamlet balked. Rosarium leads, with Baking Powder and Pearl River next. The favorite's in the ruck, running easy." For a few moments he is silent, but he has his eyes strained on the swiftly-speeding horses, and as they reach the first quarter-pole he gives tongue again,

calling out, "Baking Powder first by a neck, Rosarium half a length, Ginger Blue, Mandolin, Thomas Scott, Pearl River, Hamlet, Desdemona, and Sumatra." These positions of the contestants are duly recorded by the reporter, who between writing and listening watches the race. As the horses move up to the half-mile post the caller exclaims, as he sees a bit of bad jockeyship, "That monkey Babelton, on Hamlet, can't ride a goat. He's choking the tongue out of the horse." Some eager bettor who has got into the line eagerly asks, "Where's Ginger Blue?" "He's third now," is the answer, "and he's running well. He's not been touched yet, and his mouth's open." Now they're passing the half-mile post, and he calls out, "Mandolin ahead before Baking Powder, who is a neck in front of Ginger Blue, who is heading the ruck." Into the upper turn they round, and now the "boys" prepare to hustle. "There goes Thomas Scott," warns the caller, as the horse moves up towards the leaders. "Bennett better watch out. He's making his run too soon." A second later he cries, "Into the stretch, it's Ginger Blue, Pearl River, and Baking Powder. Hamlet swung very wide making the turn." Now the horses are thundering down to their goal, and the caller is all eyes. Half-way home, the reporter says, "Gimme the first three." "Ginger Blue, Rosarium, and Baking Powder," is his response. Then he adds, "Here comes Suma-

tra." The next second he gleefully exclaims, "Why, she wins in a walk." As he lays his glasses down to watch the finish, Sumatra comes away from the others with ease, and Hamlet and Thomas Scott dash after her. The race has now settled down into a contest between these three. The jockey of Sumatra rides as though he is oblivious of the existence of any other horse in the world except the one he is bestriding. His supporters yell at him frantically, but he takes no heed of them. Nearer and nearer draw Hamlet and Scott, who are now nose and nose. Just when it looks as though Sumatra surely must be overtaken, her jockey slyly digs his steel-pointed heels into the sides of his filly. She darts forward as though electrified, and the next second the caller announces, "Sumatra wins by a neck, Scott second, a head before Hamlet third. Ginger Blue, Rosarium, Mandolin, Desdemona, Baking Powder next, and Pearl River last." As the numbers of the horses which ran first, second, and third, and names of their jockeys, are hoisted on the telegraph-boards, the caller sagely observes, "Bennett is a good jockey, but I don't like his grand-stand finishes. He held that filly in 'most too long. I thought they were going to nip him right under wire."

"If man were constant he were perfect," says some old philosopher whose name has slipped my memory. If turf writers would not bet on

the races they report, they would be not only much richer in pocket at the end of a season, but much more valuable to their journals and the public which buys and reads their papers, than they are. In saying this I do not wish to have it inferred for a moment that any racing writer that I know is willingly influenced by his winnings or his losings in writing his reports ; I know that in many cases men who have lost fifty or a hundred dollars on a race write very fairly of it ; but this I do say, and it is the result of twenty years of observation, that men who bet on events that they have to chronicle are unintentionally influenced by their profits or losses, and their reports ultimately show it. A man may lose fifty dollars on a horse and write a fairly truthful account of the race for the next issue of his paper. Then he will hear some story of crookedness on the part of some one who had to do with the horse either as jockey, trainer, owner, or backer, and it will make a deeper impression on him than it would if he had let the animal, in the parlance of the betting-ring, "run loose,"—that is, unbacked. The next time the horse runs, or it may be for a number of times subsequently, he watches him, and those he has heard the evil stories of, most critically, and should the horse win he is sure to feel that his suspicions have been corroborated, and that the horse was pulled or otherwise prevented from winning when he

backed him. Then he opens up the vials of his wrath, and just as often without due cause as with, for the horse may have been short of work, or may have been pocketed, or may have been thrown out of his stride by stepping on a stone or into a little rut in the track, or his jockey may have misjudged the way to ride him, and may have called on him too soon or too late, or in some other of the hundred possible ways the horse may have lost the race the reporter bet on honestly, for even the Scriptures tell us that "the race is not always to the swift"; but the man who backs horses upon his own judgment, or upon information furnished him from inside sources, is very prone to believe stories which absolve his vanity or his belief from the discredit of being incorrect. In like manner a man who has won money on a horse will feel disinclined to believe stories about crookedness in a race. He has profited by the result, and is thus to a certain extent *particeps criminis*. Of course, if the evidence is indisputable or is from a source so high or reputable that it cannot be overlooked, he will write of it, but, even if he does, not with the vigor or force which would characterize his utterances were he a loser instead of a gainer by the race.

In stating these unpleasant truths I do not want to be hard on my fellow-scribes, but I will remind them that no judge of a court is permitted to sit in a case in which he has the

slightest pecuniary interest, nor is a juror allowed to pass his judgment in a case of the kind. Certainly, if it is thought wise to keep judges and jurors, in ordinary cases, free from temptation, the same rule should apply to reporters, who are the eyes of the great mass of the public and see things for it. I remember a lecture I once heard Amos J. Cummings give a fledgling reporter whom he was sending on an important assignment. Said he, "I want you to bring me back the facts, and nothing but the facts. If your orthography or syntax is defective it can be corrected here in the office, but you must bear in mind that a hundred thousand patrons of the *Sun* will have to see this thing through your eyes; therefore I want your report of it to be a pen photograph of what occurs, and not a distorted one either. Focus on facts, and you will be all right." So in kindness, not in anger or in malice, I say to all sporting writers, "Never bet a cent on an event you have to write about." The fact that men who are members of Boards of Control or racing stewards and even race judges bet on races should not influence you to follow their bad example. Then you can point out to them that they should set a better example, and be, like Cæsar's wife, "above suspicion." Besides, you will have more money at the end of the season, and you will not be under obligations for tips to jockeys, trainers, owners, or stablemen.

The sporting editor and reporter meet many strange characters and see many strange sights while in pursuit of news. I know of three who have circumnavigated the globe while reporting base-ball games. Of the many strange things I have seen in my time, two were particularly interesting. Back in the seventies I reported the last fight between Billy Edwards and Sam Collier. It was an old-style prize-fight, and the rendezvous was Pittsburg. The tip was given that the place of departure would be from the levee of Hardscrabble, a short distance above the point where the Monongahela and Allegheny join and form the Ohio. In order to avoid police interference, we were to slip away about midnight. On arriving at the place indicated I found that our conveyance was to be an open sand-barge, a very frail species of boat, about a hundred and twenty feet long, twenty feet wide, and probably four feet deep. She had no deck, and her bow was almost high and dry against the shore. Two stalwart fighters kept the gate, or rather the gang-plank, and took the tickets of the intending passengers. The night was dark, but there was plenty of light from the flames which issued from a hundred glass-works, rolling-mills, and blast-furnaces along each side of the river. The late James Parton said that Pittsburg at night reminded him of "hell with the lid taken off." Had he been with me that night, no doubt he would have secretly

congratulated himself on the felicity of his description.

Those who have attended a prize-fight or a boxing-match know that there are always a large number of the impecunious on hand who are anxious to see the sport without paying for the privilege. There were many such that night, but few of them were able to effect their purpose. The ticket-takers gave them but short conference. The plank leading to the barge was only wide enough for a single line of men ; and if the applicant for passage had neither ticket, its price, nor great influence, he was unceremoniously knocked into the water, which was at that point about knee-deep. Many were the curses evoked by these involuntary baths. The levee was torn up, as it was about to be repaired, and a short distance from the boat were a number of piles of cobble-stones, or boulders, as they are called in the West. When a thousand or more people had been crowded on the boat, and her "gunnel" at the stern was almost level with the surface of the water, a stern-wheel tug came along, fastened a rope to her, and pulled her out into the stream. As we left the shore there was a scene of terror which I shall never forget if I live to be as old as Methuselah. The rejected would-be passengers ran to the cobble-stones, and in an instant discharged a volley of a hundred or more of them at our boat. Nearly every stone took effect,

and the air was rent with cries of pain, of terror, and of rage. From boat and shore angry curses rang out, and the sand-boat would have been sunk through the attempt of her occupants to get out of reach of the missiles had not several men on the vessel discharged their pistols at the mob on shore and driven it helter-skelter up the bank. As it was, a number of people on the boat were severely wounded, one so badly hurt that he died of his injuries within three days. We hardly escaped one danger before another confronted us. The barge was so overloaded that her upper seams began leaking, and every time the tug came near us, for the purpose of taking off some of our passengers, there was such an attempt to crowd towards her as made it evident that we would founder if she came alongside. Her captain therefore kept away for twenty or thirty feet, until ten or twenty of the most determined and able fighters on the boat had been arrayed on her bow, and instructed to make every one keep his place until the tug could fasten to us and take off enough people to lighten up the barge out of danger. By the time this had been done, we had drifted down to Glass-House Riffle, several miles below the city. Then we proceeded on our voyage more comfortably and without any fear of immediate death ; but I must say that most of the company were of a character one would not care to invite to a tea-party. They made the night hideous with their carousing.

It was midsummer, and the middle, too, of the heated term. When daylight broke and the sun arose, it was one of the hottest days of the year. A place to fight was not obtained until the afternoon. Then a glen was found right on the boundary-line of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and the ring was pitched in it about a mile back from the river. One thoughtful reporter from a Pittsburg paper had a thermometer with him, which he fastened to the shady side of a tree. My remembrance is that it indicated 107° Fahrenheit. At all events, it was so hot that of the fifteen hundred spectators all but the principals, seconds, officials, and reporters took refuge under the trees on the side of the hill a hundred or more feet away from the ring. Shortly after the men began fighting, a sport who had but one match was about to strike it to light his cigar. Another sport ran to him, twisting, as he did so, a large piece of newspaper in order that he might get some fire for himself and his friends. When he and his companions had lit their cigars he threw the burning paper away from him, and it fell over a fissure in the ground some ten or twelve feet distant. Instantly there was a report which startled every one, and a sheet of flame shot up in the air for a height of at least thirty feet. It continued to blaze and roar all through the fight, much to the discomfiture of the pugilists, and it was blazing when we left the ground.

Few, except a dozen or so Pittsburghers, knew that we were in the natural-gas territory, and that we had inadvertently set a gas-well ablaze. In those days there was only one place in America, East Liverpool, where natural gas was utilized to do the work of man. I could have bought the farm on which this fight took place for a few dollars an acre. I have often since regretted my lack of foresight.

About five years ago there was a notable prize-fight between Jack Dempsey and Johnny Reagan, which began on a tongue of land running out into Huntington Bay, Long Island. The ring was pitched about five o'clock in the morning, but through unnecessary delay the men did not enter it until nearly seven. Meanwhile, the tide was steadily rising, and by the time the men began to fight it was only a foot or two from the ring-stakes. Steadily and quickly it arose, and, as the beach was low and flat, it soon invaded one end of the ring. The men battled on its highest part for another round, when it, too, was covered with water. As Dempsey walked to the scratch, or where the scratch was supposed to be, for the third round, he wittily remarked, "No one ever accused me of taking water before, but I have to now." Higher and higher rose the flood, until spectators as well as fighters were more than ankle-deep in the water. As I looked around, Jean Inglelow's line came to me, "And all the world was in the sea." The

men fought until the water was shin-deep, and Reagan was in danger of being drowned each time they clinched, as he was invariably thrown. Then the referee called a halt, and ordered the men to the tug, and the ring to be pulled up, which was done with great difficulty, and soon we sped away in search of higher ground. We found it in the shape of a picnic-grove, and there this most picturesque of prize-battles was terminated.

I know an old sport, formerly a sexton of a prominent high-steepled New York church, who was wont, in his days of church connection, occasionally to regale parties of his sporting friends with cock-fights in its belfry. He has laughingly told me of many a main he brought off there without the slightest fear of police interruption. This certainly was a case of "the nearer the church the farther from God." I am glad to say that nowadays no self-respecting sporting reporter would countenance by his presence or his silence any such desecration of a holy edifice.



EARLY EDITORIAL EXPERIENCES

15

225



EARLY EDITORIAL EXPERIENCES.

BY MURAT HALSTEAD.

BETWEEN forty and fifty years ago, the most famous feature of journalism in the Ohio Valley was the paragraphing of George D. Prentice, a Connecticut Yankee born, who had become a typical Kentuckian, and was the most brilliant Whig and the brightest writer of his time,—one who adored Henry Clay, took all the lofty egotism of that superb dramatic politician seriously, was full of faith that Clay's statesmanship had the divine flavor and blessing, and that his chivalrous individuality had an alluring quality that made his election to the Presidency, in spite of the evident glacial drift of history, as obvious and inevitable as the harvest-time and the season of autumnal realization in the procession of the seasons. The dreary round of disappointments ended at last. Clay, in the Senate, made his final failing efforts to avert the conflict of the sections. His sympathy with the society of the South alienated his loving supporters in the North. His imperious will ceased to domi-

nate his party; and he died. This event was a revolution. After him came the deluge.

Mr. Clay knew little of journalism. The chief duty of the newspaper of his party in his day was to publish his speeches, and editorial ability was most worthily employed in expounding and expanding his utterances. The Ohio editor whose fame was paramount in the forties and fifties was Charles Hammond, of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and the singularly vivid survival of his reputation has been held to be an embarrassment to his successors, as the traditions of uncommon glory overshadow the sober realities of history. Once, seeking to know for myself the origin of Mr. Hammond's persistent prominence, I examined a file of the *Cincinnati Gazette*, and found that he was for fifteen successive issues of that paper absorbed in setting forth the full meaning and declaring the profound and glittering policy embodied in Henry Clay's sonorous, but, I feared, read in the cold light of a quarter of a century gone, commonplace utterances, in which the pomp of self-assertion exceeded the prescience of political acumen. There lingered, however, an anecdote of Hammond that proved he possessed something more than a deep sense of the dignities and solemnities of his profession. He and Robert T. Lytle, the most accomplished Democrat of his day in Ohio,—father of General Lytle the poet-hero, who fell at Chickamauga,—had been out on a long walk, inspect-

ing the pickets and exploring the frontiers of Cincinnati civilization, when it occurred to the editor of the *Gazette* that he was expected to furnish a leader for the following day and must make haste to do so. Lytle, loath to part with such good company, followed him, making an unaccustomed appearance in a Whig office. The shades of night were falling fast. Lytle patiently held a candle while Hammond wrote rapidly for nearly an hour, when, with an expression of gratification that his work was well done, he thanked his friend for his polite and gracious attention, called a printer, handed him the copy, mentioned that he did not care to see the proof, and the two distinguished gentlemen resumed their promenade and finished the festival. It occurred to Lytle next day that he would look into the *Gazette* and see what had been produced by the pen of a ready writer while he held the candle; and, to his surprise, and disgust that gradually became amusement, he found that it was a very bright, and he thought extravagantly overdone, though not absolutely malicious, assault upon himself, in which his shortcomings as a politician were unsparingly reviewed, but his personal cleverness, with a funny pretence of reluctance, admitted.

Of Hammond, however, it might be written, as of Edgar Allan Poe's knightly hero,—

“But he grew old, this knight so bold,”

and the bright particular star of the press in the firmament of the valley of the Ohio was Prentice, of the Louisville *Journal*.

His best work was in dashes of from two to ten lines, each with a "fist." The leaders were unrivalled as leaders, but they had not the keen sparkle of the inexhaustible Prentice paragraphs. His poems also had many fond readers, and he had a following of poets and poetesses whose efforts he carried with a few flattering and taking lines for each poetic gem; and it would have been unsafe to say that they were not all gems. There must have been at times a dozen ladies, each with the gift of song, contributing to the beautifully-printed pages of the *Journal* of Louisville, and they never contributed lines, few or many, that they were not framed in words of editorial praise, always pleasant and felicitous; and the poetry of the paper was held to be as valuable an attraction as its politics.

Prentice had been in his youth associated with John G. Whittier, and he transplanted the passion for high-class production from the banks of the Connecticut to those of the Ohio, where the fruits were of a richer perfume and more tropical, but lacked the lyric ring and the lofty cry for liberty that have lifted Whittier to an elevation inaccessible save to those who have the expression that goes beyond the range of talent into the realms of the masters, and is dutifully, passionately consecrated and exercised for humanity.

Mr. Clay would have astonished any one who had attempted to "interview" him. His idea of journalism was that the newspapers were not worth minding in the hostilities they directed against a public man, unless they touched unkindly upon his personal habits and private affairs ; then it was necessary that some one should be held accountable, and the trouble of locating responsibility began. The papers that knew their leader were a convenience, but they should be careful how they published a great man's speeches. Indeed, the last time that Mr. Clay mounted the stump at Lexington he refused to speak until the reporter of the Associated Press, who happened to be Mr. Richard Smith, now of the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette*, was compelled not only to drop his pencil, but to leave the ground. The impertinence of sitting right before an orator addressing his constituents, and taking down his words, was resented, and had to be abandoned. Mr. Smith's success in obtaining a fair summary from a listener who knew politics and had a good verbal memory and took no notes was looked upon as an outrageous example of presumption. The wrath of Mr. Clay at the disrespectful idea of an irresponsible writer for unknown newspapers undertaking to give what he said with a view of scattering it by telegraph, and not asking his permission, was lively, and his language picturesque.

After the politics and poetry of Prentice and his contributors, and the death of Clay, there grew up a school of journalism that was devoted to Western literature and political regeneration, or there were those in it that so explained their mission.

The Mexican War, meant to extend the area of slavery and the dominion of Democracy, furnished a hero in Zachary Taylor, who, as the Whig candidate, was elected to the Presidency, and the era of a great reformation set in, as was supposed. Taylor was a strong Southern man and a large and humane slave-holder, but his devotion to the Union was unqualified, and he simply made known in the most matter-of-fact way to those who were talking of, under circumstances freely fancied and discussed, the dissolution of the Union, that if they attempted such a thing, no matter what happened, he would take the field at the head of the army of the United States, and shoot and hang according to the guilt of those who took up arms against their united country ; and the highest praise awarded him was by those who felt themselves menaced,—that he would be “just fool enough to do so.”

The old man certainly produced a temporary abatement of sectionalism. The death of Taylor, from eating cherry pie after a sunstroke received while laying the foundation of the Washington Monument, confused the country,

and in the course of the agitation there were experiences such as no one had imagined, for the strength of the forces in antagonism had not been developed, and were amazingly beyond calculation ; and the nation never knew its own greatness until it had been made manifest in the war of the States.

There was a time when it seemed to many ardent friends in the central valley of the country that the peace and dignity of the Union depended upon the election of Thomas Corwin to be President of the United States. Corwin, like Clay, was a man of genius, with less will but greater wit than his old leader. With the most genial temper and fascinating speech of his time, he was rich in humor and gracious with wisdom, but he was not destined to be president ; and indeed the editorial writing meant to advance his interest was of a feeble sort, dwelling chiefly upon the observance as a sacred obligation of what was called the "Compromises of the Constitution" and the wickedness of despoiling our sister republic, Mexico, of her territory to provide more slave States.

All sentimentality about the rights of the Mexicans to land was wiped out by considerations of the glory of our arms in overcoming military antagonism, the addition of the noble realm of Texas to our undisputed empire, the discovery of gold in California, and the sensibility that Jefferson's Louisiana purchase had

originally included all we got from Mexico by conquest.

The people of the North were growing weary of the alleged obligation to return slaves, and the magnificent extension of the republic was not, in peaceful days, a good thing to complain of. At any rate, opposition to our gains in the Southwest, while it might have been high morals, was not good politics.

There was mingled with the feeble editorial matter beautiful poetry written by lovely women, inspired by a dollar per verse. This was the condition of Cincinnati newspaper literature when I deserted a good farm twenty miles northwest of that city, and became at College Hill an alleged student and writer for the press. The hill was an eminence from which the smoke of Cincinnati could be seen. This personal movement never seemed to me influential in general affairs, but it had an appreciable force so far as I was concerned, and may be worth a few words as an indication of tendencies. The Cincinnati papers spent seven dollars a week each at that time for telegraphic despatches, and regarded themselves as imposed upon by the grinding monopoly that spoiled the regular old new channels through the mails. The papers were printed on flat presses, and the working of two thousand sheets an hour was an achievement that was much applauded, and a material advance to getting off twelve hundred in the same time. No one had

dared to hope for one sixth of the capacity in a press since developed, or of multiplying presses with duplicated plates. The editorial and local matter was mixed in the same type. The most conspicuous feature of the editorial page, save when some important amateur contributed a labored leader, was a poem, original or selected, usually original, and considered a liberal and attractive investment by the publisher who had the power of the purse. The issues of the journals were of four pages each, and the first column of the fourth page contained six times out of ten a bear story, and the other four times a snake, bird, or Indian tale. On Saturdays there was a page of literary matter, and a part of this, which was the fairest display of native and cultivated capacity for the week, was usually a chapter of a novel or novelette that was romantic as to the late redmen and the contemporary pioneers and white hunters of Kentucky and Ohio. These were the sunflowers in the garden of the Western world of letters.

My first writings for the press were stories of frontier life, adventures in the wilderness, suggested by the still recited recollections of the old men and women who remembered the Indian wars and the first corn-fields on the Mississippi. Then came more ambitious contributions, and reviews of the publications current. *Harper's Magazine*, *Godey's Lady's Book*, and the *Southern Literary Messenger* were the great

steady lights. Presently there was in the West a slow, but distinct and progressive, movement of journalism ; and it was visible in an increased estimate of news and a separation defining the difference between news and literary papers. But journalism was a word never used, not invented, or forbidden, as all the printed sheets, daily or weekly, were newspapers, and those who did the work were editors, locals, and reporters—not members of the press, or journalists, or of the staff or corps. No, indeed ; any one who had stated that he was of the corps, or on the staff, or engaged as a journalist, would have been excluded from the social circles of the members of the press. These were conservative times, days of delightful communion, no unseemly competition, no strife for "scoops," all acting under a general agreement not to print for a morning newspaper anything arriving later than ten o'clock of the night before, while an evening paper did well if it picked up the happenings of last week. The swim that I was in carried me into news work rather than literary labor, and my first exploit that disturbed the easy-going ways was to sit up until two o'clock for the New York and Baltimore papers, snatch them from the mail-bag myself, and scissor two columns under the head of "Latest by Mail," or "Midnight Mail Matter" ; and it was easy thus then to beat the telegraph, which doled out to the unappreciative world about four hundred

words a day on the average. There were a few heavy head-lines when Daniel Webster died, but before that they were not obtrusive. It was considered an error, however, for a journal issued on the Monday after Webster died on Saturday not to have the news that he was gone, and the editor who had caused his Monday's issue to be printed on that memorable Saturday night was subjected to ribald remarks, and he grew tired and sad. The death of Webster was one of the first events to which the press of this country did contemporary justice.

The rapid growth of news telegraphing put aside for a time bear stories and original poems, but they are turning up in ancient beauty as modern novelties, like old fashions in gowns and bonnets. One of my errors in newspaper management, I think, was in dismissing the bear story, about which hangs an eternal charm ; and another mistake, of a graver character, was holding base-ball, as a news source, in contempt ; but the most costly of my experiences has been in overrating editorial instruction of the public, and allowing myself to form an unscrupulous habit of telling too much truth.



CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM



CALIFORNIA JOURNALISM.

BY M. H. DE YOUNG.

THE history of journalism in California only reaches back forty-six years, yet in that time the changes have been as startling and the progress as great as in a century of newspaper life in New York or Philadelphia. There are men to-day in California who saw the first newspaper struck off from the old-fashioned Mexican handpress at Monterey only a few months after Zachary Taylor entered upon the campaign that ended in the surrender of the great Pacific Coast empire to this country. California was then a Mexican territory, with no prospect of yielding anything more valuable than hides and tallow, which had been the staples for over a hundred years. The mass of the people had no more desire for news than have the subjects of the King of Dahomey to-day. The Spanish Californian lived a quiet, comfortable life, unvexed by any events in the great world, of which he had only the vaguest idea. He only learned of the Mexican War weeks after it was begun, and

in the same way he knew not that the territory of Alta California had been surrendered to the hated Yankee until two months after the ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In fact, events moved with as slow a step in this old Spanish California as in the land of Poco Tiempo, and to-morrow was the limbo into which most of the work and responsibility of the day was thrown.

With the discovery of gold and the rush of thousands of gold-hunters, all was changed as if by magic. To pastoral quiet succeeded eager strife for wealth ; to self-contained contentment, an unrest that seems to be bred in the bone of the native ; to utter lack of interest in all that the world was doing, an ardent desire for the freshest intelligence from all quarters of the globe. Fancy a Spanish-American paying five dollars for a copy of an Eastern newspaper, as the Californian gold-miner willingly did in the early days, or travelling for days over the roughest trails in order to learn the news at the nearest mining camp. For twenty years the East was always referred to by Californians as "home." And this name gives a clue to the Californian's intense desire for all the news that could be secured from Maine to Texas. Add to this representation from every State and Territory in the Union the large number of foreigners who flocked here from Europe, South America, the Orient, the South Seas, and Australia, and one may get a

faint conception of the cosmopolitan character of the patrons to whom the Californian editor was called upon to cater. That cosmopolitanism set its stamp on the early journalism of California ; and it has continued to this day.

It is a curious fact, that the men who started the first newspaper in California used the old type and press which had served for the issue of official orders by the Mexican governors of the territory at Monterey. Their ready adaptation of the cast-off apparatus of Mexican officials was an earnest of what the Argonauts would do when, three years later, they swarmed into the country and transformed it almost in a twelve-month. Colton and Semple were these pioneer editors who in 1846, when California was purely pastoral and no one dreamed of gold or the great changes that it was to bring, issued a singular-looking little paper, printed on thin foolscap used by the Mexicans for making cigarettes. Colton was bred a preacher and had some literary ability, while Semple was a genuine Kentucky backwoodsman of the Davy Crockett type. Semple was the master of a vocabulary that afterward amazed the delegates at the convention which framed the first State constitution, and his florid rhetoric was seen in the early issues of the paper, which was called *The Californian*. The paper appeared weekly, and, though neatly printed, it looked queer, as the type was made by a Spanish founder and in-

cluded no letter W. The ingenious Americans were forced to make two vv's serve for the missing letter. By the same irony of circumstance that was seen in all early California history, this newspaper, printed with Spanish type on Spanish paper with Spanish ink, was used to advocate the new American *régime* and to favor the pretensions of the Bear Flag party.

Equally original with these two pioneer editors was the third man who engaged in California journalism. He was none other than Sam Brannan, a Mormon elder, who brought a ship-load of the Latter-Day Saints from New York to California in 1846. Brannan shrewdly included a printing-press among his cargo, and in the first month of 1847 he began the publication of the Yerba Buena *California Star*, in the shabby little town which is now known as San Francisco. Brannan's worldly wisdom was seen in the fact that he made a secular newspaper of the *Star* from the outset, occasionally throwing a sop to his conscience by the issue of a religious supplement. Brannan was a shrewd publisher and made a good newspaper, so good that when the gold excitement came it absorbed the *Californian*. Its files contained the only complete printed record of the events of the early days of the gold rush. It existed until the beginning of 1849, when it was merged into the *Alta California*. Under this name it enjoyed for thirty years great prosperity. Brannan, the first Cali-

fornia newspaper publisher to exhibit push and enterprise, became noted also as the first of the great millionaires of the Pacific Coast, but the heyday of his fortune lasted only a few years, and he died poor, neglected by men whom he started on the road to wealth.

Any one who looks over the files of the early California newspapers will be struck with the vigor and directness of the editorial writing of those days, as well as with the many signs of the extreme remoteness of California from the rest of the Union. The stormy days that led to the shooting of Editor King, and the formation of the big Vigilance Committee, probably saw public opinion bring as great an influence upon newspapers as was ever witnessed in this country. The suppression of the San Francisco *Herald*, almost in a day, because it opposed the Vigilance Committee, was the most striking incident in early California journalism. It has never been paralleled in recent years, though the loss of prestige and influence of the old Sacramento *Union*, when it was bought by the railway monopoly, is a conspicuous proof of the fact that no amount of wealth at the back of a newspaper can compensate for lack of honesty and the want of positive convictions.

In looking over the last thirty years of California journalism, the feature that strikes one most forcibly is the originality in methods employed by the newspaper men, the greater part

of whom were self-made. The majority of the men who have left their impress on California journalism learned what they knew in a printing-office ; the hard practical school of the newspaper was their college ; they had no leisure for broad culture, but the sweat of their brows acted as a mordant in fixing what they learned. They were far-seeing, and filled with the spirit of enterprise which attempts everything and never knows failure. It is the greatest compliment to the men who founded and shaped the California journalism of to-day that, though out of all touch with the East, they actually anticipated many of the changes and improvements made in New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago during the last fifteen years. Before the overland railroad was known, and when the telegraph was not to be counted on for effective service over the Plains and the Sierras, illustrations were used freely in my own paper in the daily issues, and a special feature was made of the Sunday paper, which had a distinctive head. The *Chronicle* was the first daily newspaper in the country to issue what has now become so universal,—a special Sunday number, of extra size, filled with letters, sketches, fiction, and miscellaneous reading matter. This has now become so common that it is difficult for one to realize the hard fight made in many cities to establish Sunday newspapers.

To give any adequate sketch of California journalism during the last thirty years would

require far more space than is allowed me here. It must suffice to touch briefly on the most significant features. The completion of the overland roads marked the dividing line between the old and the new journalism on this coast. The railroad and the better telegraph facilities ended for all time the isolation of California. She was now in touch with the East and with the world, and the very first to feel the quickening influence were the newspapers. The struggle for news became keener, and the advent of the *Chronicle*, a free lance in every sense of the word, led to extraordinary rivalry. Probably no large newspaper in this country sprang from so small a beginning as the *Chronicle*. At first it was distributed free in play-houses as a programme and sheet of theatrical gossip, but soon the demand for it justified its issue as a regular morning newspaper. For many weeks it was run off on an old hand-press, nearly all the labor of writing, printing, and distribution falling upon my brother and myself. When the paper began to grow our troubles increased, and for months we never knew one day what the next would bring forth. It was admirable training in business management, for there is no sharper of the faculties like uncertainty in regard to the "walking of the ghost." Our rivals were rich and long established, but five years saw us drawing to the front, for nothing can check the growth of a newspaper which really has the

cause of the common people at heart, and which at the same time is determined to print all the news, without fear or favor.

California is a peculiar newspaper field, and it is difficult for the Eastern journalist to comprehend its singular features. In the first place, there is a greater demand for foreign and domestic telegraph news than in almost any other State in the Union. This is because of the large number of Europeans who have come to California, and also because the early settlers still refer to the East as home, and are still eager to get any news from the district where they spent their childhood and youth. The foreign element here is very large and influential, and it is not confined to the cities, as in many Eastern States. The growing of the vine, the olive, and the prune has attracted large numbers of Italians, French, and Portuguese to various districts of California, and the hope of securing a home in the pleasant colonies that have done so much to develop Southern California and the great San Joaquin valley has brought here people from every European country. Even the home-loving Hollander has come here and has settled in the heart of the San Joaquin, where the mercury runs above the hundred mark in summer and frost is almost unknown. The colony at Pomona, near Los Angeles, was founded by English people, and it is distinctly British to-day. It sprang into temporary notoriety several years ago, owing to the

trick that one of its residents played upon Sackville-West, that led to his retirement as British minister at Washington. Nine tenths of these foreigners settled throughout California are people of means and culture, who demand the news of the world, printed in good form, with intelligent comment, and who will be contented with nothing that is not complete and carefully prepared. Then come the pioneers and the families of pioneers, and all the host of Eastern people who have made their way to this coast and founded homes. They believe California is the best State in the Union ; they return from visits to the East with a stronger love for the Golden State ; but nevertheless the yearning for the old home is seldom extinguished, and they read with the keenest interest anything which concerns the place where they spent their early years. This makes imperative the spending of large sums every month for special despatches to supplement the report of the regular news associations. It would surprise any newspaper manager of Philadelphia or Boston or even Chicago to learn of the telegraph bills of the two large San Francisco dailies. No paper in the first two cities pays one half so much, and it is doubtful whether any Chicago journal is under so heavy an expense for telegraphic news.

One thing which swells the telegraphic service is the great advantage gained by the difference of time between New York and San Francisco.

With a leeway of three full hours, much may be accomplished in getting the news of the world, and in printing good reports of big events that occur so late in the morning that it is impossible for Eastern journals to touch them except in extras. Thus, a New York correspondent of a San Francisco paper may go through the early editions of all the leading papers of the metropolis, cut out the most important special news that each prints, and file it for his own paper. If he cleans up his work by half past three or four o'clock in the morning, all his despatches will reach San Francisco by two or half past two, and will appear in the paper which goes to press at a quarter before three o'clock. Events that occur in England as late as nine o'clock in the morning, may be cabled to New York and wired to San Francisco in time for publication in the regular morning edition. An instance of this occurred several years ago, when the rivalry in oarsmanship between Oxford and Cambridge was unusually keen, and there was heavy betting in this country. The race was wired promptly at nine o'clock, and a brief report of the result was received here before three o'clock and was published. This was a specimen of the girdle that the cable and the telegraph put around the earth.

Although the demand for full telegraphic news is a heavy drain on the pocket of the newspaper publisher of California, he is consoled by the

fact that he has the best clientage in the country. In no other State will you find so many daily newspapers sent to remote parts of the State and adjacent Territories as in California. This is due mainly to the fact that large and important mining, lumbering, cattle-raising, and agricultural interests are in the hands of men who feel their exile from the world, and who find some recompense in keeping thoroughly abreast of all the news. Such men are not content with any weekly digest of the news ; nor, as a rule, are the dwellers in mining towns. All these people are liberal supporters of their own local papers, but they all want the big city newspaper, though it does take half a week for it to reach them. So one sees here on this coast the unique spectacle of thousands of subscribers to a daily San Francisco newspaper living in remote places in the Sierra and the Colorado desert, in Utah, Arizona, and Idaho, patiently waiting three or four days for the journal that gives them an epitome of one day's doings in the great world of which they only hear the faint echoes. It is unwise anywhere in the West to judge of a man by his dress or appearance, and it is particularly unwise in California. Many a rough prospector or sheep-herder in the Sierra is a man of as wide experience of life as Ulysses, and valuable suggestions are often received by the editor from men who have been dead to the world for a generation.

The California editor of to-day stands too near the foundation of journalism in his State to get what has been so aptly called the historical perspective. It is difficult to obtain the true proportions and values ; but of one thing we may be certain,—the journalism of this State has grown out of the petty and provincial stage. We on this coast appreciate far better than the East our relations toward the general government. We have cast off many early prejudices. We are willing to bide our time, confident in the assurance that many things which have been attributed to race prejudice or pioneer feeling will be found to have sprung from far deeper and truer sources. California journalism of the next century will probably be marked by its old capacity for plain speech, hard common-sense, and native Western humor. To lose these would be to lose the salt that savors it. But it will gain in breadth, in tolerance, and in judgment. In the past it has faithfully mirrored a unique life and a distinctive character, and in the future we may be sure it will not lose its fidelity in reflecting the salient features of California life.



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE FUTURE



THE NEWSPAPER OF THE FUTURE.

BY JOHN A. COCKERILL.

THE newspaper has become already so essential a factor in the public and private life of the United States, that it is to-day the only trustworthy medium of communication between the sovereign people and their official servants. Through it alone do the office-holders learn the will of their masters, the people. This seems to be the greatest function now filled by the newspaper press. That it does fill this function, and so executes the highest duty and privilege of its existence, cannot be doubted, since eminent instances in the memory of all warrant the conclusion, that when a newspaper ceases to speak for that portion of the public, greater or less as it may be, which has been represented by it, the importance and influence of the newspaper disappear.

If to serve the public good be the loftiest ambition at which the successful daily journal may aim, a mission only secondary in importance to this is inevitably and most successfully fulfilled

at the same time. And that is the mission of obtaining with scrupulous care and universal vigilance and of carefully preparing and fearlessly presenting to the public all that is and ought to be *news*.

The progress that has been made in these directions may best be inferred from the *media* of communication between the general public and the sources of news and instruction which have been swept away by the influence of the daily press, such as, for instance, the lecture-platform, the Village Oracle, and the Oldest Inhabitant. There was a time when the farmer, the laboring-man, and the small shopkeeper looked to the rostrum for their annual instruction and entertainment, to the Village Oracle or Oldest Inhabitant for their opinions and prophecies, and to the local politician, whom we now call a "boss," for their schooling in public questions. All this has to a very large extent been abolished. The most brilliant lecturer in the world can no longer compete with a morning newspaper. The Oldest Inhabitant finds himself ruthlessly *functus officio* by the simple process of learning from his newspaper that there are in different parts of the country ever so many Older Inhabitants. The day of the political boss who can flagrantly defy public opinion, and command and receive the support of honest men, irrespective of his moral and actual deserts, is absolutely passed. Doubtless when the newspaper has reached its

perfect development it will have accomplished even greater results, on lines parallel with these,—but not more astounding.

If this is due to what the newspaper is now and has been,—and it is now doubtful if any successful newspaper ever stands still, since the very nature of its existing prosperity demands improvement,—the question at once arises, What will the perfect newspaper of the future be? If it grows, as it must, in importance, in influence, in the ability to achieve great objects for the public good, will its mechanical growth and development and its facilities for reaching a growing public be improved in proportion?

In local and municipal affairs the influence of the daily newspaper was never so great as now. The cities of the United States will grow, our communities will expand in all directions, our civilization will perfect itself in other directions, our average standard of public intelligence—which is now greater than that of any other country—will reach a higher level. The newspaper must grow in proportion, and will inevitably lead the procession, instead of being dragged up by the force of a popular determination. It is actually impossible now for an openly wicked, dishonest, or base man to be elected or appointed to any office of consequence anywhere in the United States. It has not been very many years since it was not possible to make this statement. The change is directly to

be ascribed to the influence of daily journalism. The thin veneer of social polish, the public protestations of virtue, and the sanctimonious wearing of white robes in high places, no longer serve to conceal the rottenness within. No other power than that of the press ever would or could have produced this result. The good achieved in this direction alone is incalculable. The direct and inferential influence of such a newspaper press upon the morality of the citizens at large, and especially of those who, but for its earnest insistence upon honor and honesty in office, would be compelled to fall under the example and teaching of corrupt men, is a fruitful and profitable channel for thought. What higher goal could any individual or agency have attained?

The newspaper has become tacitly acknowledged to be the administrator of all public trusts. The circulation of the newspaper press, collectively, has now reached such tremendous proportions, that its constituency is almost co-equal with what we term "the public," the body governed and taxed through the instrumentality of certain of its individuals whom it designates for that purpose, and over whom the newspapers help it to keep watch. How else is it conceivable, under a scheme of government as simple as ours seems to be, relatively, and yet as complex as it is in reality, for the public to keep track of the doings of its official agents, now

numbered by the hundreds of thousands in the United States? A defalcation in a frontier post in the far Northwest, when it has been telegraphed to hundreds of newspapers, and has fallen under the eye of thoughtful men in the largest cities as well as the smallest hamlets, has from that very fact ceased to be a semi-private or personal affair, and has become an object of public concern, to the correction and punishment of which the attention of the central government itself at Washington is instantly demanded by public opinion. In such a vast country as that over which we are pleased to say the President of the United States "rules," there is no way other than through the medium of the daily journal, of keeping all parts of the machine in the necessary electrical contact with each other and with the central representative governing bodies.

In no way, perhaps, are the people of the press kept in more immediate touch with one another, than by the letters from its readers which every useful newspaper delights to receive and publish for the benefit of the public. In no more immediate way may the public pulse be touched; for these letters are the spontaneous testimonials of the readers to the forcefulness of the journal which they read, whether they approve or condemn its course.

In national affairs, as well as in those of the municipality and smaller locality, it is difficult

to form a fair idea of the tremendous leverage of the press. To take an illustration : the facts seem to warrant the assertion that the course of the New York *Times* during the Tilden-Hayes contest of 1876 changed the current of American history. Had the *Times*, then probably at the zenith of its influence as a Republican newspaper, not made so bold and apparently earnest and conscientious a claim that Rutherford B. Hayes was elected President by virtue of having received the electoral votes of three Southern States which in reality should have been counted for Tilden, as most people then thought, Mr. Tilden would in all probability have had those votes added to his column when the calm, judicial frame had again fallen upon the public mind, and have anticipated the return of the national Democracy to Federal power by eight years. That is merely one illustration. Others may readily be found.

The editorial pages of a dozen American newspapers, each standing conspicuously for its own city or community, as well as for its own area of cognate communities or States, are eagerly, often fearfully, read by the representatives in office of the American public. That there will be any marked change in the general form and method of American government is not probable. It is therefore improbable that this loftiest function of the American press will in any great measure be varied or departed

from. Its own importance must be constantly supreme.

As the influence of the daily journal for all that is good must, from the very nature of the case, continue to grow on all sides, the instrumentalities through which the newspaper exercises that influence must, as a matter of course, grow proportionately in number and development. It is exceedingly unlikely that, during the remainder of this century at least, there will be any marked deviations from the general form and arrangement at present in use by the best newspapers on this continent. Changes there must be, in time, in all respects, methods, and instruments, but the present state of mechanical perfection which has been attained by the higher exponents of the newspaper art is such as to preclude any significant and startling changes in the near future. What those changes will be in the number, size, quantity of columns, quality of matter, and mechanical device, is a fruitful subject for speculation. I will touch upon it farther on. Those would require other changes also in the distribution, number, and general arrangement of the workers. In time, no doubt, a single great newspaper may be compelled to employ hundreds where it now finds work for scores of men and women. That there can be any great improvement in the *morale* of the mass of working journalists, in their audacity, courage, intuitive "nose for

news," instinctive loyalty to the newspaper, not the man, and patient endurance of privations and lack of appreciation which would discourage almost any other class of workmen, is hardly to be expected. It seems, indeed, hardly possible.

The achievements of the heroes of the daily newspaper, in their own sphere and in the nobility and courage with which they fill it, whether it leads them to the court of St. James or the police court, are not likely to be surpassed soon. The adventures of and public benefits accomplished by the war correspondents alone, within the memory of young men living, form a single chapter in the great volume of heroism. As the war correspondent was unknown a generation ago, so new species of newspaper heroes may spring to the front a generation hence. But they must all be animated of necessity by the same dauntless devotion to duty, and remorseless struggle for success, as those who have already resulted in raising journalism abreast of, if not above and ahead of, most of those professional pursuits which absorb the energies and reward the labors of thoughtful men and women. How insufficient and inadequate and often grudgingly given are these rewards in journalism we are often reminded. No greater reproach has attached to an honorable vocation, than that originality of thought and skill and courage of execution which in any one of the half-dozen

other pursuits of human action would have resulted in making their possessor rich and famous, have in journalism redounded altogether to the name and coffers of the capitalist, leaving the rightful reaper of the reward barefooted and hungry on the threshing-floor ! But that this condition of affairs is changing, none conversant with the facts can deny ; and that still greater changes for the better must appear is equally sure.

The day of the long-haired, unkempt, wild-eyed journalistic genius, whose laundry-bill bore the proportion of one in ten to his account at the grog-shop, who dashed off a brilliant *jeu-d'esprit* on Monday, or perpetrated a wonderful stroke on Tuesday, and spent the rest of the week drinking and talking about it, has vanished far into the dim distance, so far that it can never by any possibility return. There is already an *esprit de corps*, a common fellowship, a concrete self respect, and a general striving after the good of all and the betterment of the profession, which have worked wonders in the last decade, and before the century closes may yet be expected to accomplish still more in raising the general average of the newspaper worker to that higher plane of excellence, of public and private usefulness, which has already been attained by leaders here and there. From these heights helping hands and encouraging words are extended to the struggling brethren below.

The means through which this result has been accomplished is the Press Club ; and I firmly believe that the Press Club of the future, and especially the Federation of the Press Clubs now so happily begun, will render greater service to the profession of journalism than any and all other forces combined.

While the position of the American journalist has so changed for the better as to be a matter of marvel to himself and his friends, the status of his brethren in other English-speaking countries, and especially on the Continent, is by no means all that could be desired. As surely as the Republic of the United States is to be the great nation of the earth at no distant date, even if it be not so now, great in the broad democracy of its government, in the simplicity of its institutions, in the opportunities it offers alike to rich and poor, native and foreign-born, great in the average intelligence, education, refinement, and morality of its people, and greatest in its newspaper press,—so surely will that newspaper press stand at the head of journalism in all countries. That much, indeed, has been achieved already. In number and influence, magnificence of equipment and alertness of resource, the American newspaper is now far ahead of any and all competition. Great Britain may have its *London Times*, but the United States has its *Times* in every city. When Lord Palmerston used to drive by for Mr.

Delane on his way to the Park in the afternoon, that he might put himself in touch with all great questions of the day by an hour or two of social chat with the editor of the *London Times*, he unconsciously foreshadowed the position which the great daily newspaper was soon to take and hold in the esteem of all public men.

It was the man whom he sought. The newspaper influence of to-day is abstract, disconnected from the identity or personality of any individual, and this tendency to impersonality, to the constitution and exercise of one mighty potentiality irrespective of any one man or any one dozen men, will, I believe, be one of the most marked characteristics of the journalism of the future.

The *London Times* goes on from one administration, from one decade, to another, from one editorial tenure to another, with no palpable diminution or variation in the weight and consequence of its thunderous voice. So must it be with the great perfect newspaper, towards the production of which scores of millions and thousands of men are working and striving. There can be no more Delanes; the newspaper has outgrown the ideas of individuality of any one man. With the growth in impressiveness and importance, abstract and concrete, will come the diminution of individual consequence. The editor must become more and more an

anonymous inaccessible entity. He will simply be the engineer who has charge of the locomotive for one "run" or for one day. His personality will change perhaps from morning to evening and from week to week, but while on duty, whoever he be, he must keep an intelligent hand on the lever. The firemen, conductor, brakemen, may all change too; but, whatever comes, the train must sweep on down the grooves of progress.

The circumstances under which Mr. Delane became editor of the *London Times*, and the exact limitations of the function which he filled so ably in that establishment for so many years, are worthy, it seems to me, of a passing note here. He was the libel-preventer. Having consulted him once whether or not a certain publication was libellous, Mr. Walter, the proprietor of the paper, grew unconsciously into the habit of consulting him, and after a while asked Mr. Delane if he would not agree to go to the office every evening at eight or nine o'clock, after most of the matter was in type, or even later in the evening, after the debates in the House of Commons were over, and go carefully through the proofs for the purpose of elision, concentration, and suggestion. It was thus that Mr. Delane edited the *London Times*. He was a tremendous suggester. He could talk on a half dozen subjects with a half dozen different men, in the selection of each of whom for his best

work he had used his own keen intelligence, and so waked up their intuitions, inspired their imaginations, refreshed their memories, as to produce the best results. Never writing a line himself, he contrived in this way to publish a newspaper which for its own public and in its own chosen scope was the greatest that could have been produced.

What better illustration could there be of the vast improvements recently made in the mechanical and editorial departments of a great American newspaper than the present constitution of the Chicago *Herald*? No building in the world is probably so thoroughly adapted for the purpose for which it was erected. Certainly no home of industry is so effectively and at the same time so magnificently equipped. What would an *ante-bellum* journalist say to a business office with three thousand six hundred square feet of floor space, flanked by sixteen columns of genuine Sienna marble, and with entrance doors, lockless and keyless, which can never be closed, summer and winter, morning and night, day in and day out, through the year? What would the old-time "typo" think of a composing-room with its walls of white enamel, its quadruple cast-iron type-stands with cases for one hundred and eighty men, its electric calls connecting each case with the copy-box, its aerial railway conveying advertising matter up to the business office, its separate clothes-closet for one

hundred and sixty men, its extensive reference library for the use of the proof-room, its marble closets, filtered ice-water coolers with solid silver, gold-lined drinking-cups, its three hundred and forty-eight incandescent electric lights, and marble-topped lunch counters and tables? What would have been thought of marble bath-tubs for the stereotypers?—of a great central library for the editors and reporters, around which are arranged a score of handsome editorial rooms, each connected by copy- and speaking-tubes with all the others? What would the old-time journalist, with his long hair lingering affectionately on his greasy coat collar, say to a publisher's apartments in which all the metal fixtures are oxidized silver, and all the wood-work of solid mahogany? What would the old-time hand-press foreman think of ten Scott-Potter presses in a straight line, operated by a single line shaft one hundred and twenty-four feet in length?—of marble clothes-closets and bath-rooms for all employees, and a constant flow of cold, clean water, day and night, in every room, from an unfailing artesian well?

And yet is there not good reason to believe, that in some respects at least, the newspaper of the future may as far surpass its forerunner of to-day, as the Chicago *Herald* building of to-day has surpassed the cheap and dingy newspaper building of twenty years ago?

There is no more inviting field for specula-

tion, in this direction, than that which deals with the question of newspaper supply and distribution. Pneumatic tubes, and perhaps a parcel delivery service, will do much to speed the delivery of the newspaper to its city patrons. Special trains from great newspaper centres to distributing points a hundred or two hundred miles away are not only no longer novelties, but have already become necessities ; but why should it require a stretch of the imagination to suppose a series of pneumatic tubes radiating from New York City to Boston, Buffalo, Rochester, Albany, Troy, Trenton, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wilmington, and Harrisburg, by the use of which one great morning newspaper could be printed in the City of New York complete in its news and news-editorial and feature pages, leaving only the local pages and local-editorial columns to be supplied in the branch offices in each of those cities, and from them distributed by a subordinate series of tubes, under a different name, to a semi-local constituency surrounding each of those subordinate centres ?

The newspapers of New York can now, on the morning of their publication, reach nearly four million readers in the State of New York, and going outside of the State limits can find their way into the hands of more than seven million readers by noon on the day of publication. Yet it is pretty certain that the aggregate number of the issues of all the morning papers published

in New York City at present is not one million copies. What vast strides remain, then, to be made in this local field alone before the goddess of Journalism plumes her pinions for new flights !



MEN WHO REIGNED



MEN WHO REIGNED.

MEMORIES OF BENNETT, GREELEY, RAYMOND,
PRENTICE, FORNEY.

BY JOHN RUSSELL YOUNG.

I HAVE been requested to contribute something to these noteworthy papers on journalism. Of personal experiences I recall little that would be useful, remembering what has been written by the gifted gentlemen who have prepared this series. My own career in the press has been that of a humdrum laborer in a calling full of trial, opportunity, and fascination. I fell into it in early boyhood, and kept with it many years, following various roads in its service, at home and in lands beyond the sea. In later days circumstances have made me a truant in my devotions to the press ; but I have no feeling towards it other than gratitude and pride as a noble calling with every incentive towards charity, patriotism, and achievement. And as I look back, I see as it were a long procession of journalists I have known, so many of them no

longer with time, but in step with the music of eternity.

Some of those who were memorable to their fellows, and still with us in spirit and tradition, I knew in their day and when they reigned. When the war came, journalism in the East was governed by Horace Greeley, James Gordon Bennett, and Henry J. Raymond. I knew Greeley and Raymond upon terms of intimacy. I saw a great deal of the elder Bennett in his old age, when, no longer in the stress of the battle, he could look on with a philosophy beautiful to the young men who were permitted within his circle. In the Southwest journalism was governed by George D. Prentice. Halstead and Medill were winning their spurs. McCullagh was in the ranks. Whitelaw Reid was speering about for army news, while Horace White was diligent in Washington employments. George Alfred Townsend gave promise of his wonderful career by dainty writings in verse and prose for the city columns of the *Philadelphia Press*. Henry Watterson as "Asa Trenchard" was sending jingling letters from Washington to *The Press*, which I used to read in manuscript before they were snipped into copy-takes and given out to the printer.

James Gordon Bennett is a name which for sixty years has had a dynastic place in the kingdom of journalism. The founder of the Bennett

dynasty lived for the latter part of a generation in the United States, suitor to varying fortunes, until he saw that there was more inherent value in a penny than in a sixpence, and founded *The Herald*. My earliest impression of Bennett was that of a vast, sinister shape which had come out of the infinite, like some genii of the Arabian Nights, to overspread and darken the heavens. There was an aspect of terror in what young eyes saw of this, a lawless, eccentric influence sweeping a wayward orbit, and above human conditions and limitations, breathing wrath upon those who would not bow down and worship.

I first saw the elder Bennett one bleak snowy night towards the close of Lincoln's Presidency. A guest with my ever hospitable and gentle friend Mr. Haskin, at his Fordham residence, nothing remained after dinner but that we should speed over the snow with tinkling sleigh-bells to the Bennett home on the Hudson. If my imagination had gone into darkened fancies over the ideal Bennett, the man as I saw him drove them away. Hair white and clustering, a smooth face, soon to have the comfort of a beard, rather above the middle size, prominent aquiline nose, a long, narrow head with abundant development in perceptive faculties, a keen, boring eye which threw arrowy glances, bantering rather than hearty laughter, a firm, masterful jaw, talk in a broad Scottish accent, which he seemed to nurse with a relish. His speech had the piquant,

saucy colloquialisms which stamped his individuality on the *Herald*. His manner stately, courteous, that of a strenuous gentleman of unique intelligence, giving opinions as though they were aphorisms, like one accustomed to his own way. Whatever he may have seemed in the columns of his journal, the man as he welcomed us was wreathed in courtesy and good will.

I was to see Bennett on many occasions between this winter's night encounter in 1864, until our last meeting in May, 1872, a month before he died. You felt in his company the impression of a man of genius; humor, apt to run into mockery,—until it seemed almost as if it were the spirit of Voltaire breathing through him. His mind teemed with ideas, which streamed into his talk,—saucy phrases, invectives, nicknames, keen bits of narrative, surcharged with a cynical pessimism, which remained, one might fancy, as a legacy of early days of disappointment and trial. For this man had fought the world,—had fought it down! The world would not come in his need, and now he reigned apart, looking upon it with scorn.

Bennett admired Andrew Jackson, and next to Jackson his admiration was Grant. He was the first of the great editors to recognize Grant. There was the affinity of the Scottish blood, and the attraction of Grant's Scottish tenacity of character. The editor had an eye for results, and the campaigns of Grant were ripe in results.

Bennett did not have a cheerful view of the war. There was no outlook but irretrievable bankruptcy, against which, as he said with a smile, he had provided by keeping a special deposit of gold in the Chemical Bank. When the bottom fell out, he would have swimming-gear of his own, and substance likewise, and not go down in a sea of paper currency and inflation.

There were reasons in those days why even a more cheerful man than Bennett should be deep in gloom. The concern of Lincoln was lest the Union would be destroyed in a self-imposed bankruptcy before the army overcame secession. The military problem was solved when I saw Bennett in later days, and no one could have a more cheerful view of the national future. I remember some *Herald* articles published in the weeks succeeding the surrender of Lee, which I used to dig out of the files and read for the splendor and breadth of their foresight. And, in many conversations in his closing years, I recall the enthusiasm with which the venerable man would dwell upon the assured glory of the Republic.

This was shown especially on one of my latest visits. He had surrendered to his son the practical control of the *Herald*, and received his friends in a small, richly-garnished corner-room of his New York house, in the second story, looking out upon Thirty-Eighth Street and Fifth

Avenue. He was very old and feeble,—old in everything but genius. The face was scantily bearded, and, as he sat folded in the ample chair, with quilted gown, his head bent with years, his keen eyes gleaming through heavily-rimmed gold spectacles, and heaped about him a pile of newspapers, there was a sense of majesty, even as that of the king on his throne. On this occasion I found him reading a report, several columns long, from a military officer, detailing a reconnoissance in the Yellowstone Park. And had I read it? I presume not. Some immediate story of the foolish fleeting hour had intervened, and military reports were not exhilarating. But I must read it. What a marvel that Yellowstone, and what a land, and what a country, with those awakening wonders day by day!—geysers spouting at times and ceasing to spout, radiant clays with their pinks and blues, their crimson and saffron and pearl, and the rainbow phenomena, the hot steaming springs with healing in their waters. Such fertility, such beauty! and not the half was known.

What this wise man saw in the officer's story was an object-lesson. Living in his serene atmosphere of hope and contemplation there was no romance like a fact. The things we called men, and the grasshopper brawls we called events, how small and mean to one who revelled in this revelation of Nature in sumptuous, gaudy mood!

Bennett, as I used to read him, was the intel-

lectual child of Walpole and Cobbett. He was an accomplished man. Although for the first generation of its existence he made the *New York Herald* a journal which the humblest could comprehend,—although he understood the value of the journalistic axiom never to shoot above the heads of the people,—I question if any of his peers were better educated. He had lectured on political economy, taught the languages and the higher mathematics, had written Byronian verses, and stories of the Maria Edgeworth school. He had studied the world from the moors of Scotland, the wharves of Boston, the academies of Charleston, the composing-rooms of Philadelphia, the lecturer's pulpit in New York, and the Congress galleries of Washington. The lesson he had learned,—the stern lesson that the world was a masked battery which must be carried at the point of the bayonet,—the fierce lesson that his one appointed duty in this existence was in the fortunes of James Gordon Bennett,—this he preached in the *Herald*. He preached amid derision and contempt, amid misrepresentation and personal violence: he preached and won. The world knelt to his sceptre, and when I saw him he reigned as no man has reigned since, or, to my fancy, ever will, in the kingdom of journalism.

A pupil of Walpole and Cobbett in literature, the political ideas of Bennett were influenced by the tremendous upheaval of Napoleonism. He

was a contemporary of Napoleon, and his plastic mind had taken from and hardened under the bewildering influence of the French Emperor. Napoleon—what he did or would be apt to do—was among Bennett's familiar forms of illustration. He told me that one of the first articles he had ever written was an editorial on the battle of Waterloo and the fall of Bonaparte for a newspaper in Aberdeen. After Napoleon, Bennett, like most students who had studied under the supra-classical traditions of the earlier century, was immersed in Roman history. His parallels and illustrations, his moral and historical reflections, were apt to come from Plutarch and the classic fathers. He would cite them in defence of a paradox, for his genius was quite capable of believing one thing in June and the contrary in July. "I print my paper every day," he was wont to say when charged with inconsistency. And when some strange, unexpected sensation in the *Herald* would burst upon the town to its wonderment, Bennett would tell the story of the dog of Alcibiades, whose tail was docked to the end that Athens might talk about its master.

Horace Greeley was a leader. To him journalism was not merely a vocation, an honorable means of earning daily bread, but a profession. He gave his newspaper, in calling it *The Tribune*, a self-conscious name. Bennett was content with

the busy, noisy office of a herald; Greeley had something to say, and must say it. The selling of news and narratives and literary criticisms, the imparting of precious truths upon deep ploughing and ensilage,—these, indeed, were grateful offices, but disputation was the higher duty of man. So during the years of his busy life, from the late thirties when he was in the *New Yorker* and the *Log Cabin*, until the sad unnecessary end in 1872, Greeley was ever in argument. His moral aims were high. This was an atrocious world,—that he knew very well. It was permeated with Democrats, and free-traders, and idle folks given to drink. There were evil men and evil women; but that was no reason for giving it over to fire. It should be converted. There should be regeneration through the spirit of daily reproof and objur-gation. Greeley labored with the world to better it, to give men moderate wages and wholesome food, and to teach women to earn their own living, and that it was better that they should learn how to make shoes than to play on the piano.

Greeley inherited from his Scotch-Irish ancestors plainness of speech. "I can," he used to say, "write better slang than any editor in America." He knew the value of words. The traditions call him profane, and nowadays one rarely hears a story of Greeley which does not turn upon some quaint archaic use of an improper phrase. Yet he was far from

being profane,—was pure-minded, and chaste in speech, as a daily intercourse of years enables me to testify. He was impatient of ignorance or frivolity. He had a complaining way, generally amusing from its quaintness, apt to become petulance if anything teased. He had the capacity of spontaneous aversion,—formed opinions of people by a kind of second-sight. I knew one noted man whom he disliked, as well as I could make out, for no other reason than the color of his hair. He never forgave another for being a college graduate. Life and its employments were an earnest purpose : there should be no trifling by the wayside, no lolling over vanities, no giving way to meretricious appetites ; and therefore the greatest of crimes was drink. A man's troth was sacred ; it was the human expression of a divine attribute ; and therefore, next to drink, there was no crime so base as marriage infidelity. His dislike to tobacco, as to wine, was an indication of personal discomfort. There was no virtue quite so desirable as thrift, and thrift was best served by small salaries. The material happiness of mankind was a care. The Jersey marshes that stretch from Hoboken to Newark distressed him. "Is there no way—are there no lessons in the economic conditions of Holland to teach us how to reclaim these wasted square miles of marsh and overflow, and make them into enduring homes ?" This was a frequent inquiry. His

dislike of slavery, when you sifted it down, was rather an earnest of sympathy with the white man who was undersold in his labor, than sentiment for the negro.

The anti-slavery atmosphere surrounding the *Tribune* was not inspired by Greeley. It really came from the gifted young men who were attracted to the *Tribune* because of its independence and high literary standard. Greeley was generous to sincere, well-meaning thought, whether he accepted it or not, and he was a purist as to form. So in time, beginning with the advent of Ripley escaped from the ruins of his Brook Farm,—or, as Carlyle, if I remember, called it, Potato Gospel—experiment, until the coming of Sydney Howard Gay, who had been Garrison's colaborer in anti-slavery, the *Tribune*, in spite of Greeley—rather by reluctant grumbling acquiescence than his judgment—was governed by men who had a fanatical aversion to slavery. They were resolute, brilliant, capable, irresponsible, intolerant,—not above setting things on fire for the fun of seeing them burn. They attracted Greeley by their sincerity, and charmed his keen literary sense with their gifts. They won the *Tribune* and carried its editor with them. I fancy the attitude of Greeley towards the *Tribune* in the early days was a blending of wondering admiration and despair,—something of the feeling with which, as we read in children's story-books, the affectionate

mother hen sees that her chickens are, after all her brooding cares, ducks, and will go quacking into the streams. I can conceive no wider divergence in intellectual opinion as to the means of attaining moral and political results, than between Mr. Greeley as a leader and thinker, and the wayward forces which surrounded him in the making of the *Tribune*. "I never," he once said to the writer, "opened the *Tribune* in those days without a terror as to what they might make me say after eleven o'clock at night."

Greeley was loyal to his journal. Consistency was the corner-stone of its credit. He ruled it as the wise ruler governs a state,—not according to his predilections, but by precept. Once a policy was laid down and the course marked, he stood by it. He never fettered those who took his place with contingent instructions. They must act according to their light. He might therefore walk the deck, his heart heavy and wrathful, but as the vessel headed so she must go, until there could be some reason to be justified towards men for the course being changed. I remember his narrative of the Somers mutiny, the hanging of Midshipman Spencer, son of a cabinet official, and with a boy's craze to be a pirate on the Spanish main, and the excitement when Commander Mackenzie returned. Greeley was away, and young Raymond in command. Raymond, swift, instant, bold, swung out the *Tribune* irretrievably upon

the side which happened to be the reverse of Greeley's views. Intensely as Greeley felt about it,—for he was intense in everything,—he would not change the *Tribune* nor explain. Raymond might be a headstrong, impetuous youngster and the *Tribune* wrong, but, right or wrong, it must be consistent. In this apparent inconsistency was profound journalistic wisdom. It was the courage of genius. The *Tribune* must have character. It could afford to make a mistake : it could not afford to be a trimmer or time-server.

The Somers incident is remembered as a tradition told me by Greeley himself. I recall another instance even more remarkable.

When President Johnson's administration gradually became, as stern Republicans viewed it, that of a Christopher Sly in the White House, Greeley, not without impatience, came to see it in the same light. He believed, however, that it was good politics to let Johnson alone. "All that Andy wants," he would say, "is rope enough and time enough, and he will save us trouble." The *Tribune* was rather in this temper when Greeley went off to lecture in some out-of-the-way region,—no telegraph, no communication. Suddenly Stanton was removed, and the issue with Congress came as if a dynamite bomb had been thrown from the White House into the arena before the Speaker's chair. The party arose in passion, and the answer was Impeachment. The

Tribune led the way. "Impeachment is Peace," it cried; and there was a season of turbulent public opinion which recalled the seething days of the French Revolution.

The *Tribune* leaped and bounded. The circulation swept onwards. There was joy in the exchequer. Greeley returned in grief from the Minnesota woods. He did not believe in impeachment. "Why hang a man who was bent on hanging himself? Had n't Andy the requisite rope, and was he not making the best use of that rope towards a welcome ignominious end? And why should Elihu Washburne, and Ashley of Ohio, and Thad Stevens insist upon transforming a case of desirable suicide into one of undesirable martyrdom? And, moreover, was it not perilous—was it not even flying in the face of God and defying the warnings of history—to introduce these crazy, reprehensible French methods into a composed American legislature?"

As I have since read in the narrative of Mr. Blaine and the memoirs of Grant, these leaders came in time to this same opinion. Blaine and Grant favored impeachment when in vogue, but were grateful, upon reflection, that it has failed. Their maturer thought was that of Greeley at the moment. Grave and earnest were his lamentations as he returned to the deck of the *Tribune* to find his ship surging ahead in the mad Impeachment seas.

As in the Somers mutiny, however, Greeley

was loyal to the *Tribune*. He never changed its course. Only those in his confidence knew how he grieved over that precipitate venture. Under similar circumstances the elder Bennett would have dismissed the staff, dictated three or four historical leaders fraught with allusions to Julius Cæsar, a dozen cynical mirth-provoking squibs, and steered the paper into line with his own thought. Mr. Raymond would have written a series of misty philosophical articles and persuaded his readers to go about with him. But with Greeley the *Tribune* had spoken. Moreover it had spoken the voice of the party,—the deep, angry, perhaps rash voice ; but it had spoken. He saw the material gain, the bounding circulation, the smiles of his chancellor of the exchequer, but, as in the case of the bailing of Jefferson Davis, had he been at home and in command, it would not have weighed as a feather against the higher voice of his conscience.

The signing of the bail-bond of Jefferson Davis was an act of moral courage characteristic of this extraordinary man. When it became known to a few of those near him that Mr. Greeley meant to visit Richmond and enter into recognizances for the appearance of Mr. Davis to answer the charge of treason, there was sore dismay. The night before leaving he came into my room, and, other matters out of the way, talked about it. He was impatient over the

dissonance of friends to whom he had spoken, for it was not in his nature to endure dissent, or to be reasoned with when he had made up his mind. He recited their arguments. The *Tribune* was never more prosperous, and that would be injured. There were the soldiers who subscribed for the *Weekly Tribune*, keeping it up in the hundred thousands, and who had not tired of singing about "hanging Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree." They would desert his standard. There was *The American Conflict*, his two-volume war-book, with its enormous sale, from which for the first time in his life he had the assurance of a good deal of money. There was his canvass for the United States Senate, the consummation of that assuredly in sight. Here were three distinct reasons, any one of which would have disturbed the judgment of an ordinary man, and each crying in trumpet-tongue against the proposed sacrifice. Greeley, however, had thought it over. Mr. Davis would be bailed whether he signed the bond or not. That he knew. They might assign whatever motive they pleased. There was a duty,—that of stilling the after-storms of this horrible war, of giving the Southern people an earnest of one Republican's desire for fraternity. The seas might rise, or the mountains fall, or the incumbent heavens compass him about, but he was going to Richmond. And he went.

It came to pass as was feared. The *Weekly*

Tribune received a staggering blow. Thousands abandoned it in anger. The sale of *The American Conflict* ceased, and never recovered. The canvass for the Senate—a canvass, as it seemed, with every certainty of success—went down into darkness; and even the Union League of New York was summoned to protest against a fellow-member bailing the Confederate chief. The losses to Mr. Greeley in money, newspaper hopes, and revenues, and the consummation of a proud ambition dear as the ruddiest impulse of his heart, were immeasurable. He had counted them. He knew the temper he braved, the resentments he awakened, the force of Republican anger. But he went his way as Luther of old, smiling and brave. Those of us behind the scenes saw the sublimity of this self-renunciation. We might question its necessity, its timeliness, but it was the act of a patriot who felt that the dearest of his life were as nothing when the country could be served.

There was no name in those days more familiar to the younger journalists, more frequently mentioned with affection and respect, than “Raymond of the *Times*.” I first saw Raymond on the battle-field of Bull Run, in company with Russell of the London *Times*. I last saw him standing on the steps of his office, in the joy of ripe, triumphant manhood. That night he was to be found stricken and dead on the

threshold of his home; no loss in my day so untimely, nor meaning so much to our profession and the political welfare of the country. Raymond was a young man,—not fifty, as I recall his years,—and Grant was entering upon his Presidency. Raymond had been “Lieutenant-General in politics” to Lincoln, as Lincoln called him, and he would probably have held the same office to Grant, with what results in the shaping of the Grant administration and the avoidance by the new President of the mistakes incident to a want of political knowledge we can readily conceive.

For several years I was on terms of intimacy with Raymond, and as a young journalist in a minor sphere, lived like the rest of us under his fascination. He was the kindest of men. He had an open, ox-like eye, a neat, dapper person, which seemed made for an overcoat, a low, placid, decisive voice, argued with you in a Socratic method by asking questions and summing up your answers against you as evidence that at last you had found the blessing of conviction. He was never in a hurry, and yet there was no busier person in journalism.

Raymond had the Rochefoucauld sense of observation, and in conversation you found yourself in presence of a thinker in a constant state of inquiry and doubt. He was a journalist in everything but his ambitions, and these tended to public life. I once asked him why he

took the trouble to go to Congress and endure that atmosphere of idleness and irritation, when he might have his beloved books around him, and hear the inspiring clangor of the presses under his feet. "Well," was the answer, "it was a privilege to feel when you answered the call of your name that your voice was a determining factor in the government of the Republic." Raymond's constant attitude of doubt was against his success in legislation. He was conservative. He could not endure a caucus. There was nothing in this world entirely right or entirely wrong,—no peach that did not have a sunny side. Therefore to an impatient party—to a party, for instance, mad with an impeachment fever—Raymond was an impossible leader. In France he would have been a Girondist, and, riding in the tumbrils with Vergniaud, would have met his fate with a smile.

And yet Raymond had shown in political conventions, in legislation, and in the press, the utmost intrepidity. He was a brave man, and liked the joy of a fight. But when it was over he had no skill in discussing its moral consequences. The fighting quality was in his blood,—in his clean-cut, condensed, incisive face, the clinched lips, the pallor that came with heat in controversy. But, after all, what good? There was always that other side, and in this wearisome world was anything worth an expense of temper and time? Yes, there was always the sunny side

to the peach, and better spend our days in looking it out than in brawls.

This ever-deepening criticism, this spirit of doubt and inquiry, made Raymond challenge the theory that the press was a profession. He had no grand ideas about the Archimedes lever which moved the world. What was the press, the fourth estate,—whatever we called it, with our rhetorical frills and fribbles,—but a business, to be so treated, a means of livelihood and thrift and earning money? “There is nothing,” he once said to me, “of less consequence to a public man than what the papers printed about him yesterday,—nothing of more consequence than what they may print about him to-morrow.” I have thought that it was this conception of journalism which deprived Raymond of the moral force as a teacher which belonged to such a man as Greeley. If the press had a business aspect to Greeley,—and he was not insensible to the duty of earning one’s daily bread,—it never appeared in his editorial admonitions. Greeley was the advocate,—strident, implacable, vehement in season and out of season, resolved that mankind should not go to perdition,—not if it could be prevented by a generous circulation of the *Tribune*, and especially the weekly and semi-weekly editions, with their admirable treatises on agriculture. Raymond was the quiet, critical, somewhat impassive man of affairs, who looked at the whole panorama like the loungee at the

club-window, thinking only of its movement and color.

In its entirety, I take it, we have had no more brilliant career than that of Raymond. He was successful as a very young man, and I note no failure but what came from the misconception which threw him for a season into Congress. He had the undivided love of his fellows. From the tone of his conversations after he left Congress, I think that he had resolved to return to journalism, never to leave it, but to love it with connubial fidelity. If this had been permitted, his genius would have achieved much, for the period was that of change. He might have anticipated the recent revolutions in the press, to the extent at least of foreseeing and grasping those stupendous commercial advantages which are among the trophies of the century. I can well believe that this was in his heart,—the ultimate reach of his ambition. He had named his journal *The Times*, having its English namesake as his ideal. Improved by many trials, with the wisdom of experience and success, with an intrepid chivalrous sentiment in what he proposed and did, with the universal respect of his generation, with an amazing celerity of action and clearness of judgment, Raymond in his prime seemed better fitted than any man I have known to take up the standard and lead the journalism of America to its still unattained destiny. But Raymond in his prime

was to die,—a generous, noble-minded, aspiring soul, whom those who loved sorely grudged to see lapsing into silence and night.

I cannot say that I knew George D. Prentice, although I have had conversations with him. It would be hard under present press conditions to make intelligible his exact position in journalism. We looked at him as an erratic, ever-shining star,—a wonder in the Southwestern skies. There seemed no end to his genius,—that daily stream of wit, comment, verse, the saying of the oddest things in ten lines, a style with the freshness of spring, gayety, courtesy, snapping fire when provoked, but always marked with humanity and patriotism. Prentice was an American whose Americanism spread from sea to sea. He was neither insular, parochial, nor mountain-hemmed. There was as much in the granite of Massachusetts or the Louisiana loam as in the blue grass of Kentucky. The soil to be sacred had simply to be American. That Kentucky remained true to the Union was due to George D. Prentice. I thought of this with reverent gratitude to his memory as I stood by his grave, now so many years ago.

I saw enough of Prentice to have my own private photographic summary of him, as it were, when he came to Washington in 1861 and became the guest of Mr. Forney, with whom I was living as private secretary. Loyal Washington went

into a triumphant mood over this visit. It meant so much. Prentice was from the South. He was intolerant for the Union. To our fancy he had been writing in defence of our cause with a pistol for paper-weight and a bowie-knife for a pen-handle. And when he came, what with the fame of his doings and our fancy aflame over his coming, we were prepared for some Plantagenet knight who might have stepped from the pages of *Ivanhoe*. What we saw was the silent man, old before his time,—fires latent, if not dead,—slowly moving, dormant, a seamed face, the remnant of the soul in his eyes, which gleamed at you and told something of the genius which for a generation had governed the Southwest.

One evening especially I recall, when we had Prentice for a period of worship in Forney's rooms on the brow of Capitol Hill,—Washington below, the lights of Arlington in the distance, an occasional warning note of cannon from the batteries beyond to remind that war was afoot, and such a company! Lincoln, arriving late, with that tired, sad, inscrutable face, which seemed in communion with destiny; Seward, in loud angry declamation over French and English sympathy with secession; Cameron, his Cabinet footing growing unsteady, and throwing dismay by his arguments in favor of freeing and arming the slaves; Russell, of the London *Times*, rather under suspicion in select Union circles,—who sang Thackeray's "Little Billee"

ballad with a rollicking Irish humor,—and “Underhill of the *Times*,” as we knew him then, to sing “John Brown” for the first time to a thrilled company. A crowded Washington party—every nerve strung with the excitement of war,—soldiers, statesmen, camp-followers, politicians,—loud talk bursting into oratory, misunderstandings and explanations, the atmosphere of doubt which hung heavily over Washington gatherings in those days,—“who was true and who was n’t?”—whiskey and champagne, and such a gobbling of salads and creams,—one of those famous but now impossible war parties, extravagant in its hospitality, surging around Prentice, who sat in a state of being worshipped, alive to nothing but champagne.

Cameron, however, must insist upon making a speech on his favorite theme,—emancipation. Cameron was an awkward speaker, looked at the table, as a rule, when he spoke, and when making a point pounded the table. He had a clean, concise style, said what he meant to say, and left no doubt as to his meaning. To Prentice, to many Union men from the Middle States, this idea of emancipation was as repellent as that of secession. Cameron was a year ahead of his time, and even among Republicans very much alone. His speech chilled the company. Caleb B. Smith, a member of Lincoln’s Cabinet, repudiated him as in any way speaking for the administration, amid cheers and wineglasses in

tingle. Cameron listened defiant, looking as stern as one of the crags of his ancestral Lochiel.

After Smith, Prentice woke up, the fire aflame, and came with passionate retort. He at least could speak with a claim to be heard. He had come from the picket-lines of the Union. He had not been living in snug Pennsylvania or sympathetic New Hampshire, but out on the line. Rebellion had broken into his State and thrown distraction over his fireside. He had suffered, he had labored, he had endured. But it was for the Union. Was he to come to Washington and be told that all this was for the negro,—for a mere slave? Because the cause of the Union was just, were all other rights to be sacrificed? Was the sacredness of the Union incompatible with rights sacred before the Union was even a dream?

The speech showed Prentice in a glow,—what was in the man. The speech over, he lapsed into abstraction,—heard with apparent apathy the congratulations of those who came to disavow the Secretary of War. And when Cameron, in his hearty, sensible, prompt way, advanced with outstretched glass and intimated that there was an eloquence in champagne more subtle than even the voice of a Cabinet minister, Prentice awakened to the summons, and hearkened with an almost vanished smile to some story from the Susquehanna that had its genesis when Jackson was President and George the Fourth was king.

John W. Forney was my first master, and I served him for some years, in the early days of *The Press*. There is much to be said of Forney that must serve for another occasion, when some estimate of the man and his work may be submitted to his countrymen.

Forney had a distinct personality, unlike any of those eminent contemporaries. He was a Pennsylvanian, with the strength and limitations of his nativity. To him, with true Pennsylvania instinct, the Lord left little worth creating when He finished with the Lancaster valley. This was his horizon, with broadening outlooks towards Washington and New York. He had the fire of Gallic genius, an impulsive flashing nature, typified in his concentrated eye-glance. The governing element in his character was intrepidity. He could see but one thing at a time, and what concerned him must concern the universe. While this gave him singular power and force, it was the force of the rifle-ball.

There was a Napoleonic genius in Forney, but he was Napoleon on the island of Elba. What he would have done had he attained his empire, who can say? Forney had the loftiest ambitions; and there were in him capacities for leadership, for destruction as well as construction, for war as well as peace, surpassed by those of no man of his time. But fate doomed him into some petty Buchanan brawl, some barren carrying the water and refreshments business of

"supporting Douglas," some earnest, unavailing efforts to win from Lincoln and the Republicans the recognition due to the incomparable energy and patriotism with which he supported the Union. He never came to his own.

Forney never learned—or at least never applied—the lesson which Bennett seared into the hearts of the generation,—that the world must fear before it follows, that there is a good deal of the dog in what people call public opinion, and that it must be well flogged before you have the comfort of its affection. But to have done this he must have been as Swift or Voltaire, and not the kind, appreciative, sympathetic gentleman as we knew him. His greatest contribution to the press was the lesson of candor and courtesy. He was the first of the then reigning journalists to teach good will and good fellowship in the press. He was insensible to abuse, indifferent to misrepresentation. He never replied in anger to the angriest taunt. I recall his reading a savage diatribe, which would have justified a message under the code, and answering it by nominating his assailant for the Vice-Presidency. It was his way of speaking the soft answer which turneth away wrath.

From 1858—when Forney declared war upon the Buchanan administration—to the end of the Rebellion, he dominated the journalism of Pennsylvania, was among the reigning powers in the land. History has no better bit of political

fighting than the Anti-Lecompton controversy. It was fought to the end and won. More than any political influence of the day it secured the election of Lincoln. It came in its entirety from Forney's brain, and was won by his merciless energy and courage.

This and so much more remain to be said of Forney, when occasion serves. There were giants in his day, and he was of them. None was more to be honored than the brilliant young Pennsylvanian who came from his Lancaster home to found and direct a policy which was to sway the nation, to be one of the leading instruments under the province of God in fighting the civic side of the war which assured the perpetuity of the Union.

Yes, there were giants in those days. Of some of them I have written in a vague, wandering way. The press is no longer the expression of personal power as when these illustrious men were reigning. It has grown with a pace startling even to those who dwell upon the pace of the century. Then the newspaper was a teacher,—the voice of one thinker, one leader. Now it is a university. As much intellect is needed to disseminate a journal as to govern Harvard or Yale. The fly-sheets of the earlier day, with their thin, flimsy happenings of news, have given place to the daily volume which embodies the genius of the artist, the writer, the artificer, and the statesman. Then there was no

journal great enough for Greeley or Forney ; now there could be Forney or Greeley great enough for the journal. In their day Plato walked in the groves of the Academy and Abelard lectured on the banks of the Seine. In time their influence was to develop into schools which have nourished the genius of civilization. So with journalism. The men who reigned have gone ; but behind them remains an empire, which would have taxed if not exhausted the resources of their sovereignty.



**THE REPORTER'S FIRST MURDER
CASE**



THE REPORTER'S FIRST MURDER CASE.

BY JULIUS CHAMBERS.

THE telephone rings. It is a message from the reporter who keeps vigil at police headquarters. The night city editor responds in person, and it is easy to see from the interest manifested that something of importance has occurred. He is as sprightly as a mitrailleuse in action. He "fires" questions over the wire with the skill and directness of a cross-examiner. As he hangs up the receiver he looks at the clock, turns to an old and experienced reporter, and says :

"John Hawkins, the Wall Street banker, has just been murdered in his house on Fifth Avenue. He was found dead in his parlor by his nephew and daughter on their return from the theatre." (As he says this he already has the city directory and is searching for the address.) "The house is the second one above Forty-sixth Street," resumes the editor. "Take two men with you ; go by the elevated to Forty-second Street ; hire

what cabs you want there ; meet the headquarters' man at the house ; he will have further particulars. It is eleven o'clock. The story is worth every line you can get, and we must have the last page by 1:45. Mr. Harris and Mr.—Mr.—Johnson, you will go and assist Mr. Connelly. You will be under his direction, absolutely. Mr. Connelly, I shall hold you responsible for the 'story.' ”

Thus is the learner—Mr. Harris, let us say—about to get his first experience in a really great case.

He feels the responsibility reposed in him, fortunately. He comprehends, though he has only been in the traces a year, that the great feature of the morrow's paper will be this sensational murder right here in New York. Compared with it, he knows by the intuition of the newsgatherer, that the triumph of Gladstone in England, the thrilling train robbery in New Mexico, and the fiery debate in Congress will pale into insignificance. He has already learned that it is impossible, literally impossible, to give the readers of a newspaper too many facts and details about such a crime, rendered of universal interest by the prominence of the victim and the attendant mystery of his death.

By this time the three men are at the elevated station. They secure a corner by themselves in one of the cars, and on the facts already known Mr. Connelly plans the campaign. The student

is very fortunate in taking his lesson from such a master of the reportorial art.

"We shall take two cabs at Forty-second Street," he says. "You will go with me, Mr. Harris. Mr. Johnson will take the other. We drive at once to the house of the crime. Kase, from headquarters, already there, will have prepared a diagram of the room and searched the dwelling. It is essential that we trace Hawkins' movements from his office uptown and to the moment of his death. The club he frequents must be visited. If a robbery has occurred, the motive will be apparent. If no robbery, then we must try to find a motive. It will be your duty, Mr. Johnson, to bring the banker from his office. We must know all about the trip. See his partner, Radish, at the Windsor Hotel. He will be likely to know with whom Hawkins left the bank; secure the name and find that man. Then, hurry back to the office—we get off here."

Into the cabs they jump, just as arranged. A few minutes later, or at exactly half-past eleven, they are at the house. Kase, the police headquarters man, is watching for them. From him and the captain of the precinct, who was on the ground, the story of the crime is learned. Few additional details are added, except that the house is in perfect order, that not a thing is missing, and that the murder had been done with a piece of gas-pipe left by a plumber only two days before. This pipe had been placed in the

corner behind the front door, thus escaping general notice. It is the murder of an amateur. So the police declare. The first blow had been dealt from behind, the side of the head had been crushed, and the victim had fallen without a cry. So the doctor says. When found, the body was still warm. The front door was "on the latch"—that is, unlocked—and the light in the hall had been turned out when the nephew and daughter reached the house. It was only after striking a match, to relight the gas in the hall, that the body of the old banker was observed in the parlor. So the nephew states. The daughter is prostrated with grief, and unable to make any statements.

Connelly decides on his policy at once. Johnson's orders "go" as first given, and he is off at once. Does Kase know at what theatre the nephew and daughter had been?

"Yes, the Broadway," corner of Forty-first Street and the great thoroughfare after which the theatre is named.

"To what clubs did Hawkins belong?" Connelly asks Kase.

"To the Union, Lotos, Union League, New York, and Manhattan Athletic. Johnson asked me the same question, and I told him to try the Union League because the nearest. I believe the old chap was there to-night. He was a widower, and spent most of his evenings at one or other of the clubs."

"Very well, Kase ; go into the house until I come and then hurry down, writing your screed on the train. You have a diagram?"

"Yes ; sent it down by my office boy, brought along for the purpose."

"Good ; now interview the nephew fully ; describe him carefully ; ask him especially between what acts he left the theatre." Kase re-enters the house and disappears.

"Now, Harris, get into that cab. Go first to the Broadway Theatre. You can rouse the watchman by ringing the bell at the gate on the Seventh Avenue side. Find out exactly when each of the acts ended, and how long the intermission was. Then, go direct to the Players' Club, find somebody belonging to the company and verify the statements of the watchman, but especially ask if anybody saw young George Hawkins in the house *or saw him leave it*. Probably you will not get anything, but it's worth doing. Skip!"

Connelly then enters the house. The coroner has not arrived, and the body still lays on the floor, with a sheet over it. He looks at the iron bludgeon, then raises the covering and verifies the features of the dead man. He is John Hawkins ! The wounds can be partly seen on the right temple. The face bears a look of terror, such as the dead always wears when death has been encountered in the dark ! It is beyond the grasp of the human mind to imagine

anything more awful than a sudden encounter with a burglar in the dark! The shock is generally so great that speech is impossible. The servants upstairs had not heard a sound.

The body lay where it had been found? Yes.

Connelly at once begins a search of the floor. The carpet is a moquette of a dull, brownish tinge. With his feet, and occasionally with his hands, Connelly feels every inch of the carpet. Ah! at a point near the sliding-door leading to the dining-room is a damp spot. His hand is on the carpet instantly. He raises it. Blood! The body has been moved after death. Why? Obviously so that it can be readily seen by any person entering the front door. But, what can have been the purpose of a burglar in such an act? Would a murderer, who feared interruption, do such a foolhardy thing? Never. Wouldn't it be exactly what a man might do who knew the people expected and when they would arrive? It looked so. And the old banker's hat, where is it? The butler instantly points it out, hanging on the rack in the hall. Again a sensation! The hat has been hung there after the crime, for the binding on one side of the brim is bloody, as if it had been kicked about the floor and had rolled across one of the insanguined spots. Ah! and the lock has been "thrown off" by fingers with the marks of blood still upon them! (All front doors in New York have a catch that so fixes

the outside knob as to render it movable when desired.) Why should the murderer want the front door unlocked? So that the theory would be that a night prowler, a human vulture without home or purpose, had wandered in, been surprised, and had done the killing.

Connelly keeps his own counsel. He has discovered all these things in exactly eleven minutes. He is working with the thought of time constantly before him.

Kase appears with his notes of the interview with young George Hawkins, the nephew. It is clear and explicit. He had been at the Broadway Theatre. He had gone out between the second and third acts; had stepped into the Métropole and had a drink; had seen and spoken to Henry James, Barry Montessor, Sam Caruthers—

“He’s a member of the Calumet Club, just below, and ‘dead sure’ to be there. Drive down and ask him what Hawkins said when they met at the Métropole bar. Then go to the Twenty-eighth Street ‘L’ station and get to the office.”

Indications point to the nephew as the murderer!

Connelly thinks so, and when he reaches the office at one o’clock (having written at his “story” in the dead man’s library until a reporter sent by the thoughtful city editor relieved him), he finds enough facts to enable him to

hint directly at that belief. Of course, he knows the libel law, and defends the accused in an artful way against the theory ; but he gets in the facts, nevertheless. He feels safe for these reasons :

1.—*What Harris learned*: That the second act of the play had ended at 9 : 40 ; the interval was eighteen minutes, owing to an elaborate boxed-in scene that had to be set. Time, 9 : 40 to 9 : 58 ! At the Players' : Hawkins, one of the best-known young men in town, had been seen " in front " by Actor Leonard.

2.—*What Johnson learned*: That Banker Hawkins had passed the evening at the Union League Club. It was not his whist night—that he never missed at the Union, cards not being permitted at the League. He had walked up Broadway with his partner, Radish, to Park Place. They had had a pint of champagne at the Astor House, because Hawkins appeared to be greatly worried. No ; it could n't have been about business ; Radish thinks it was regarding the approaching marriage of his daughter to her cousin George. That was merely his surmise. Radish then came home on the elevated road ; but Hawkins took a cab, as he said he had several places to stop. He must have ended at the club. There he dined and sat till—now, be explicit. Well, the doorman remembers that he passed out just before the clock chimed a quarter to ten. How does he fix the time ?

Because his relief was due at 9:30, had n't arrived, and he was literally "watching" the clock. The relief did n't come at all, so still on duty. More important, however, was the statement of Mr. John Brandon, a fellow-clubman, who encountered the deceased stumbling along up Fifth Avenue in a very pre-occupied manner. That was apparently the last seen of Hawkins alive. He was going home to be killed !

A strange thing is Fate !

3.—*What Kase learned*: That Caruthers remembered Hawkins entering the Métropole rather hurriedly, and first having glanced 'round as if looking for a clock but finding none, had drawn his watch and said : "Hello, Sam. Why it's a quarter to ten ; come take something." He had said nothing about being at the theatre ; he looked hot and acted excitedly. Hawkins did not remain more than a minute, and a few moments after he left he (Caruthers) had occasion to look at his watch and found the time to be twenty minutes *after* ten o'clock instead of a quarter to that hour ! Caruthers had not gone to the theatre, but he had been in the Métropole when the thirsty men from that place entered after the second act. The last one of that party had departed quite awhile before Hawkins appeared.

Mr. Connelly also knows the nephew's narrative ; that the daughter is prostrated with grief— or divines the identity of the murderer ; the arrangement of the rooms in the house ; has a

diagram of the parlor floor, already prepared for publication with labor-saving rules.

The story comes together naturally after this manner :

“ MAKE UP ” SCHEDULE, MURDER STORY.

A.—Statement of the crime, exactly who victim is, and great commercial importance of his sudden taking off. (Connelly), $\frac{1}{4}$ column.

B.—Narrative of the discovery of the crime in the words of young Hawkins. (Kase), 1 column.

C.—Description of the interior of the house, with a diagram of parlor floor. (Kase), $\frac{1}{4}$ column.

D.—Exploration of parlor, and its sensational disclosures and deductions—exclusive. (Connelly), $1\frac{1}{2}$ column.

E.—How Hawkins, “ King of Wall Street,” came uptown from his office, including interview with Radish, his partner—omitting reference to Hawkins’ troubled condition of mind. (Johnson), $\frac{3}{4}$ column.

F.—At his club ; who saw him, etc., and *exactly* when he left. (Johnson), $\frac{1}{2}$ column.

G.—“ The King of Wall Street ” going home to be killed ; last sight of him alive by Clubman Brandon. (Johnson), $\frac{1}{4}$ column.

H.—What probably happened in the house ; theories of the detectives ; theory of the blood on the hat ; changed position of the body, open door, etc. Did the murderer follow Hawkins in, or was the assassin a friend who entered at the victim’s request ? (Connelly), $\frac{1}{2}$ column.

I.—Young Hawkins at the theatre ; statements of the night watchman, of Actor Leonard, and of Samuel Caruthers, bookmaker, as to conduct of young Hawkins, without comment or suggestion. (Harris), $\frac{1}{2}$ column.

J.—Here use the statement in Radish’s interview that Hawkins was greatly worried about something outside of his business. Interview, fully and accurately reproduced

—especially statement that young Hawkins was engaged to be married to his cousin and that Radish had reason to believe that the girl's father did not approve of the match. (Harris), $\frac{3}{4}$ column.

* [Turn a rule here.]

K.—History of John Hawkins' remarkable career (Obituary editor), 1 column.

L.—List of the great railroad, telegraph, ferry, bridge, land, steamship and telephone companies, banks, exchanges, and other corporations in which Hawkins was a stockholder, director, or member, with the amount of the corporations' stock. (Index Department), $\frac{1}{2}$ column.

M.—List of all the remarkable murder cases in New York during the past quarter of a century. (Index Department), $\frac{1}{3}$ column.

Thus the paper goes to press at two o'clock with an eight-column story written and compiled by six men. No confusion, no breaks—it appears like one man's work.

In the second edition the arrest of the nephew for the murder, by order of Superintendent Byrnes, is announced, and the heading and the opening paragraph are changed in order to include that startling fact. The truth comes out that young Hawkins left the theatre after the second act, and, being greatly worried about the threatened breaking of his engagement with the rich heiress, he had strolled listlessly over to Bryant Park, thence to Fifth Avenue, where he

* Turned rule in the proofs, to show night editor where second edition matter from the reporter left at the house is to be inserted.

had accidentally encountered his prospective father-in-law. The greeting had been anything but cordial ; they had walked the four short blocks to the Hawkins mansion. There the young man had entered at the elder's request to settle the question of his future. Seeing the iron bludgeon behind the door, chagrin and humiliation gave rise to an uncontrollable impulse to kill the old man and thus silence his opposition. He did so, dragged the body to the doorway, washed his hands in the butler's pantry, turned out the hall light, and hurried back to the theatre—only stopping at the Métropole to set up an alibi, the very act that first pointed to his guilt.

The novice will be surprised to see how thoroughly the entire story conforms to the changed conditions. But Mr. Connelly is not astonished ; that is one of the secrets of his art—an art that he has been studying for twenty years. Harris has done very little, you will say? True, he was not intrusted with much, but what he did he did well. He will find sufficient happiness, next day, if his journal leads the field.

As to Mr. Connelly, he hastily runs through Brown's last copy, glances over the proofs of all the first edition matter to catch any bad slips, hurries them to the night editor, puts on his coat, lights a cigar, and remarks quietly :

“Let 's go to Charley Perry's.”

AN INDEX EXPURGATORIUS



AN INDEX EXPURGATORIUS.

In nearly all leading newspaper offices there is an *Index Expurgatorius*, based upon the one which William Cullen Bryant employed on the *Evening Post*. Here is an index embodying Bryant's, which is now supplied to every reporter on one of the largest New York journals:

CAUTION.

The existence of such an expression as "Newspaper English" is a reproach to every writer for the daily newspaper. Correspondents, reporters, and editors should avoid stilted language, and as far as possible, Latin or Greek derivatives. Do not misuse:

Allude for refer:

Ludo, to play. Don't "allude" to death or misfortunes.

Apt for liable or likely.

Balance for rest or remainder.

But for only. Often in doubtful taste:

"While passing down the main street *but* two of the Haytiens actually raised their hats, while others *but* nodded.

Caption for heading.

Captivated for charmed.

Commence for begin.

Considerable for large or great :

"He felt considerable interest in the work."

Consummate, in reports of marriage ceremonies.

Convene (*con* and *venio*), to come together, for convoke
(*con* and *voco*), to call together.

Crime, vice, and sin as synonyms :

Crime is a violation of a statute law of a particular country.

Sin is the violation of a religious law.

Vice is a moral wrong, not dependent upon the country or creed of the person. What is criminal may not be sinful or vicious. Murder is not a vicious act—unless it becomes a habit to murder. "Parricide cannot become vicious, because a man has only one father and one mother."

Divine for clergyman or priest.

Dock for wharf or pier. (A common error.)

Evacuate for to go away. (It means to make empty.)

Every for all.—"He deserved every praise."

Exemplary for excellent.

Expect.—We can expect that which is to come, not what has happened.

Fructify for bear fruit.

Gratuitous means "without payment."

Great deal of for much or some.

Hon. and Esq. must not be applied to any American.

Humanitarian means "one who denies the godhead of Christ."

Inaugurate for beginning or opening.

Introduce.—In using this word observe the general rule that *the man is introduced to the woman*, unless the man is of extreme age.

Jeopardize should not be used.

Jewelry for jewels.

Learn for teach :

"You can learn, but I must teach you."—Brown's *Grammar*.

Leave for let.

Loan.—As a verb. (To lend is the verb.)

Locate for to settle or to place.

Lurid.—Often used to describe brilliant colors—as
“lurid flames”; “he painted the town a lurid hue”;

The word, according to Webster, means—“pale yellow, or a pale, dull color; ghastly, gloomy.”

Marry.—The woman is always married *to* the man.

Murderous for deadly or dangerous.

Obnoxious for offensive. (Obnoxious means *harmful*.)

Observe (to heed) for to say.

Partially for partly.

Parties or party for persons (except legal cases.)

Patrons for customers.

Posted for well informed.

Quite a number—or a number of—is meaningless.

Reliable for trustworthy.

Religion for piety.

Remains for corpse or body.

Restive means standing stubbornly still, not frisky.

Retire for to go to bed.

Ruination. Not sanctioned by Webster.

Section for region or neighborhood.

Since and ago :

“Reckoning time toward the present, we use *since*, ‘It is a year *since* it happened’; reckoning time from the present, use *ago*, ‘It is a year *ago*.’”—Johnson.

Transpire for to occur or to take place.

Those kind, or those sort, for that kind or that sort.

Thud.—“Dull thud” is forbidden.

Ult., inst., prox., for last month, this month, next month.

Unwell for sick or ill.

Ventilate for expose or explain.

Vicinity should always be preceded by its :

"New York and *its* vicinity." Not "Vicinity of New York."

Witness (to know) for to see.

Won't for will not.

The affix *er* is added to words of Anglo-Saxon origin,
ist or *ize* to words of Latin or Greek parentage, *walk~~er~~*
not *walkist*; *telegraph~~ist~~* not *telegrapher*.

THE END.





